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**THE
LAKE SUPERIOR
COUNTRY**

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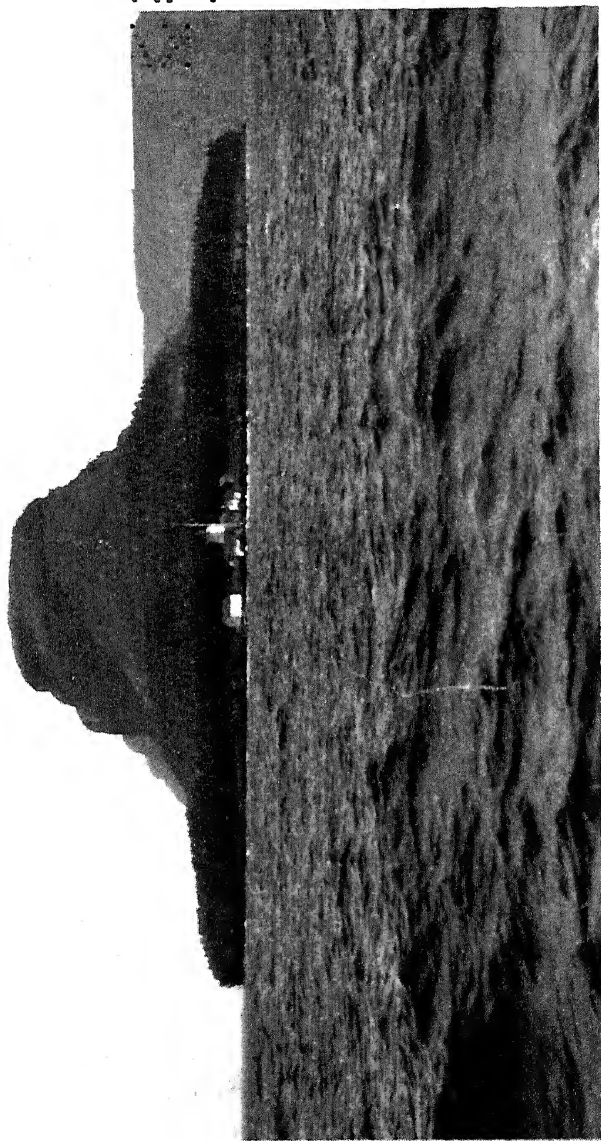
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THE LAKE SUPERIOR
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THE LAKE SUPERIOR COUNTRY

BY

T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

Author of "THE LAURENTIANS," "THE ADIRONDACKS,"
"THE CATSKILLS," "MAC OF PLACID," etc.

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAPHS AND
MAPS



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TO
HOWARD BURTT

In celebration of the silver anniversary of
our friendship; in re-dedication to that friend-
ship through the years to be.

Westtown

Haverford

Happy Valley

The North Woods

And many a nameless common of the heart,
holding perhaps the greenest memories of all.

FOREWORD

He knew the sense of the waiting wood,
The feel of the falling rain;
He heard the call, and he understood,
And he took to the trail again.

A shadowed hill with a star above
Could lure him far away;
And a hunter's fire made a sear of love
On his hunter's heart for aye.

*By the courtesy of
"Argosy-All Story."*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When a man owes not only individuals but companies and nations, how is he to express his gratitude? My trip in Ontario was a progress of hospitality, and I enjoyed the novelty of finding an interest in my errand and a continuing helpfulness toward my goal, as well as the meal-and-bed generosity usually meant by hospitality. I do not suppose that a thank-you in cold print can matter very much to the people whose kindness meant so much to me, but I append these names as a reminder to myself of days that were the happier through their thoughtfulness.

The Canadian Pacific Railway began it. I'll not forget the day when Mr. John Murray Gibbon, the author and encourager, lighted the spark for me over a lunch-table by suggesting Lake Superior as a field and the Indians as a find. The C. P. R. had helped me in my Laurentian travels, and without their repeated generosity this book could never have been written.

I owe the magazine "Adventure" for the chance of writing it gives to experts in the field of exploration, and to Mr. Raymond S. Spears for sending many pages of data that meant research. I mention Mr. Spears's book later.

I owe Mr. John McClelland for bravely spending an afternoon introducing me to the Government, without

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

whose sanction I should never have enjoyed the care of Mr. Fraser or the two Mr. Cumminses, nor should I have had my Nipigon trip with Mr. Zabitz's permission, nor met Mr. Locke, who was instrumental in the fortunate meeting with Miss Black.

Of Miss Mary J. L. Black's help I can say nothing adequate. Half this book is an offshoot of her thoughtfulness, of the information and the fun which she prepared for me. And Mr. Charles Edward Stewart and his wife were generous allies of hers in altruistic endeavor.

Next, chronologically, comes Mr. H. R. Charlton, whose courtesies on the behalf of the Canadian National Railways helped me around in their territory. I have yet to find a service equal in satisfaction to that rendered by the railways through the wilderness of Ontario. The little kindnesses performed for me by operators and trainmen, as well as by my friends in the executive offices, made the difference between a trip and a delightful trip.

Several of the other people to whom I am especially indebted are mentioned in the text. In addition I want to thank the Walter Rutherfords of Toronto for what one might call their industry of helping me. I want also to thank Miss Edith S. Watson, Mr. William R. Robinson, Mr. George Shiras, 3rd, Mr. E. F. Pabody, William Harkness, Mr. H. Armstrong Roberts, and Mr. F. A. Waugh for the opportunity of selecting from their photographs; and the officers of the Canadian Geological Survey for their aid; Dr. Herwald Geiger for his notes on Nipigon fauna, Mr. L. O. Armstrong for the Ojibway

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THE
LAKE SUPERIOR COUNTRY

THE LAKE SUPERIOR COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT LAKE

THE evening and the morning that were the first day had seen us far. We had spanned Lake Huron, climbed St. Mary's River, taken the stair at the Sault, that twenty-foot step of green water, at one stride, to point our bow at last into the June sunset which was making one inseparable glory of sky and inland sea. Ahead shone a dazzling path of light, and up this path our liner plunged, turning a deep furrow of hill-side green, and bearing into the pitiless brightness three hundred enchanted passengers.

The *Assiniboia* had already carried me over the borders of my knowledge, and I was now approaching the frontier of my imagination. The familiar lay behind, the inconceivable ahead. Once more I looked back in farewell. There stretched a plain of neutral color ending in a streak of brown, a low and inconsiderable blur, as if the artist who had finished making the

fresco of all-pervading azure overhead had signed his name; then, thinking it superfluous on such a masterpiece, had erased it with his thumb. The smudge remaining was civilization. I smiled to see how small a part of the sky it obscured. Yet I should have been ungenerous not to remember that the vessel I was on, a product of that most civilized company, the Canadian Pacific, was making possible this escape from that very smudge. I should like always to be free of the enthusiast's particular pitfall, his lyric way of denouncing the pot in order to enhance the charms of the kettle.

Why the frontier of my knowledge should have stopped at the entrance to Lake Superior is a question that must be put to my geography teachers. I remember the hours devoted to the exports of Pennsylvania, the principal rivers of Afghanistan, the boundaries of this and that; hours wasted in the arid purgatory conceived by their dull habits of mind. And I suppose that the wearisome process still goes on, for when I looked up Lake Superior in a current text-book I found these inspiring sentences: "This whole region [whither I was headed] has a rough, uneven, hilly surface;" and, "The Great Lakes are of great importance to trade." The list of exports followed. One cannot expect the imagination of children to cover a wide demesne

when their educators, writing of the greatest lake in the world, a lake whose waters and whose shores are crowded with beauty and romance, and suffused with the spirit of adventure and mystery, dismiss it merely as "of great importance to trade." Perhaps the materialism with which we Americans are reproached begins in the school, even as the German tots sucked in Prussianism from the bottle.

The rails of our ship were lined with gentle tourists with whose states of geographic ignorance I should have liked to compare my own. I could remember that Lake Superior was a body of fresh water larger than (or not quite so large as) any other, including Lake Baikal; that it was bounded on the north by Canada, on the south by a few of our States, and was noted for its fisheries. I dimly recalled one of those composite illustrations labeled (a) "Picture Rocks," (b) "Grain Steamer," (c) "Native in Kayak," the student being left to observe, if clever, that (c) referred to the description of Greenland in the next paragraph. That was all I knew about the lake; it was the terminal moraine of my classroom detritus. Where Lake Superior came from, why there was so much of it, what was distinctive about it, who its deities were, what meditations it could induce—these were a sealed book to me, and, as I found later, an unwritten one.

So, on that shining prow, uplifted as I was by the rushing, silent glory of the hour, I determined to write such a book. And that is probably the happiest moment in a writer's life, the incandescent hour when inspiration comes, inspiration being the upwelling force that carries him upon the mount, that intensifies his life. It is then that he is handed the magic purse and the invisible cloak. For once the whole vision is vouchsafed, and he is what he would be. I determined that if it were only a geography book that I should create, there should be some of this ecstasy in it. Have patience with me then for lingering on this evening.

But I was not the only member of the universe under the spell. The sun himself seemed arrested in his course by the beauty of our upper world. Already was it past nine of the evening, and the arrival of dark was beginning to look doubtful. Being nothing of an anarchist, I prefer the sun to keep the law, yet secretly I excused his loitering. To the north the green of the lake had climbed into the sky. There seemed no barrier between us and the uttermost beyond. Overhead the first star shone in an upper gulf of color. Everywhere was a vast calm, everywhere lay pale fields of shifting hues, and the presence of the northland brooded on the water. The presence, I might add, was very cool.

For circulation's sake, I did a mile or so around the deck. There was lots of room, and nowhere except on the bridge were we forbidden. Most of the three hundred had heeded the angry cry of the card-table and had gone below, though how they could forsake the very thing they had come so far to see is a question that it gives one a queer feeling to think about. But nothing could depress a man long on that deck. The soft luxurious progress of the ship stirred a curious winged sensation within me. The way we were headed seemed the very way of aspiration. It is a racial instinct of the Anglo-Saxon to go north and west. And when I stopped to peer into the purple dusk ahead I thought it would be fitting to find that the gray fates spent most of their time in those soft distances. It was the place where I should go to importune my destiny.

A door shut near-by; a tall robust figure came down from the bridge, slowed up as he neared me, and said, "A fine night, sir." The Scottish burr warmed his voice.

"Is your summer weather usually as serene as this?" I asked.

"Sometimes for weeks on end, and then again we may have fog and wind. The calmest time is from when the ice breaks, in May, till the gales begin in September. November's the worst."

"I should have thought that January would be."

"It would if we could get on the lake. Navigation closes about Christmas, sometimes earlier."

Conversation with a captain was a pleasurable novelty to me. I'd crossed the ocean ten or twelve times without so much as suspecting there was a captain on the ship; and this one was actually talking to me!

"Skipping the first fifty questions, captain," I said, "may I ask you the fifty-first?"

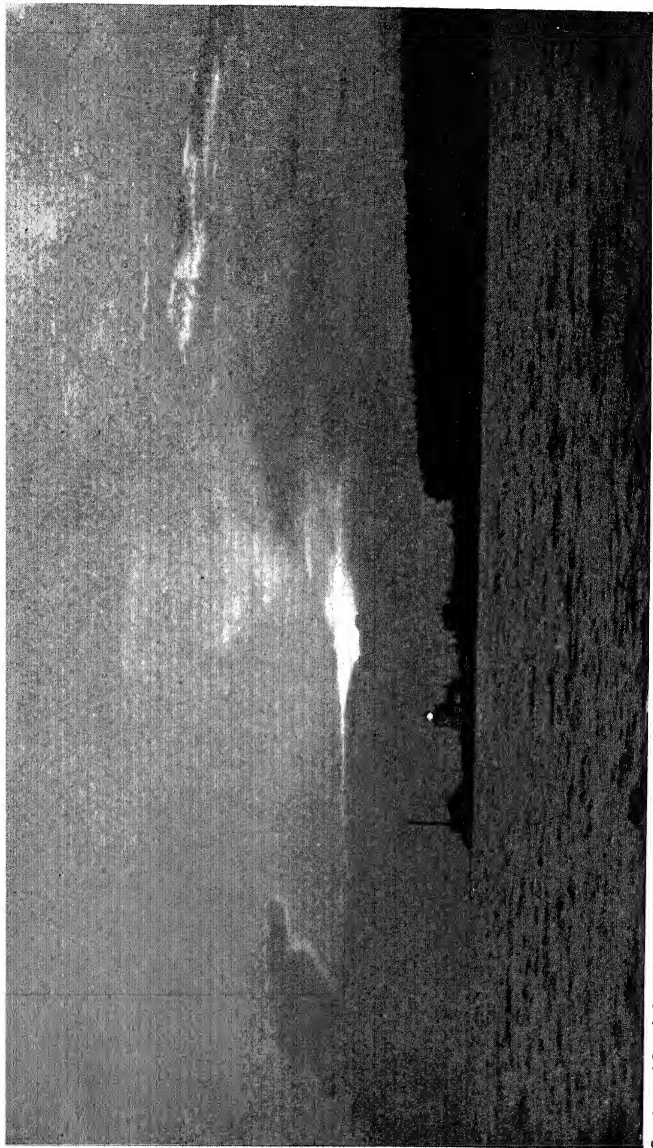
"If you don't begin with too hard a one for me."

"What is the simplest statement you can make about Lake Superior that would give its nature?"

The big bluff man smiled slowly in the starlight, and gave an inward chuckle. "You bargain like a Scotchman," he said; "that's all of them at once."

"Not quite," I said, "for I spare you the queries as to length and breadth, depth and temperature, and the height of waves. What I want is the final word of your experience, the unique quality of Lake Superior that has led you to devote your time to it."

"My lifetime," he corrected, quietly. "I ran away as a boy and shipped in a coffin to get where I am now, and I shall sail till the years or Lake



Courtesy of Lovelady Bros.

ENTRANCE TO THUNDER BAY

Superior claim me. That's the hold it has."

"I guessed that. It's why I put the question."

"It's not so hard a question," said Captain McCannel. "Lake Superior is a man's lake. It challenges a man. It's the most dangerous body of water in the world. It takes all a man is to master it, and I've not met a Lake Superior skipper who was n't pretty much of a man. The lake breeds that kind."

He was saying this in the simplest manner imaginable, and I knew the conviction had come from deep experience.

"Now, don't think that I'm belittling the ocean. It can blow there, too, and harder than here, for with us gales exceed sixty miles an hour not oftener than once or twice a year, though I recall the autumn of 1915 when the first three weeks of November produced twelve gales of over forty miles; and forty, let me assure you, can do the damage of eighty in such cramped navigating space. But it was n't the murder that I set out to stress. Men curse the cold and the hardship and go away; but they come back, proving them men."

"Proving that the reward balances the danger, too."

"Yes, it's fair enough."

"I believe you have told me the fundamental thing."

"You must find it out for yourself," he said quickly, very Scottish again. After we'd talked a while, a friend of Captain McCannel's came up, a man also of generous stature and one whom reading had made full, but not too full. I was soon walking the deck with him, Mr. George H. Locke of the Toronto Library, with my head in a historic sky.

"Fascinating!" he exclaimed, when I'd told him that I was going to spend half a year drifting about the Lake Superior shores. "I envy you the opportunity. If you go back a bit from the rails you'll find that things have not changed so very much from those stupendous days of the Jesuits."

"But the Indians are fewer?"

"There are rather more of the Ojibways, over twenty thousand."

"What sort of Indians are they?" I asked with a new interest. "Sullen, dull, clever, dishonest, civilized?"

"None of those," said Mr. Locke, smiling. "They are still primarily hunters, roamers, liberty-loving, good-natured, and illiterate. Lalemant would turn in his grave to know how short a distance he and his black-robed associates had carried the redskins on their apostolic way. You know the Jesuit Relations?"

"Chiefly through Parkman," I had to confess.

“They are the ideal missionary-society reports. I’ll have their circular of advice to men in the field sent to you.”

This was a refreshing novelty, this spirit of helpfulness and interest in my errand. I remembered my lonely wanderings in Laurentian-land, remembered how the officials of French Canada had inured me to self-reliance, and I began to thank Ontario. I shall never have done thanking her and her people for the interest, thoughtfulness, and generosity which sped my feet.

“I must repeat a stanza or two about the black-robes by Marjorie Pickthall,” Mr. Locke was saying, “for she shows so well their courageous spirit:

“My hour of rest is done;

On the smooth ripple rests the long canoe;

The hemlocks murmur sadly as the sun

Slants his dim arrows through.

Whither I go I know not, nor the way,

Dark with strange passions, vexed with heathen charms

Holding I know not what of life or death;

Only be Thou beside me day by day,

Thy rod my guide and comfort, underneath

Thy everlasting arms.

“My boatmen sit apart,

Wolf-eyed, wolf-sinewed, stiller than the trees.

Help me, O Lord, for very slow of heart

And hard of faith are these.

Cruel are they, yet Thy children. Foul are they,
Yet wert Thou born to save them utterly.

Then make me as I pray

Just to their hates, kind to their sorrows, wise

After their speech, and strong before their free
Indomitable eyes."

We walked without speaking for a few moments, our thoughts suffused with the sunset coloring of other days. My feet trod air as I realized that I was coming to a region where the red-sashed voyageur had only just disappeared around the corner of the age, and where the masonry of civilization had scarcely begun to be erected on the original foundations of things.

Midnight came and relieved our sentryship. "I must leap on the train immediately upon docking," said my companion, "and so cannot take you around to Miss Mary Black of the Fort William Library. But don't fail to look her up. She can introduce you to this region as no one else, besides being very much of a person to know," and he scribbled on a card.

I prolonged my vigil a round or two, for I could not bear to go down. An arc of pale-green fire had risen in the north, from which a few ghostly rays glanced upward, as if some celestial sentry were flashing an "All 's well" to far watchers down the sky. The night had de-

clined into a great peace. What if there were storms of sun-fire in remote regions of the universe! What if the gulfs of black and frigid space encroached, and our thin tapers of spirit flickered in these cold halls of such inconceivable dimensions! What of death and separation and frustrated aims! As far as the eye and the mind could see into those spaces there was law; as far down into the heart as one could look there was law, too. Surely then the Intelligence that had composed this all-embracing harmony on a fleeting breath could be trusted to whatever end.

) It was a temptation to pace out the night, dawn being so short a while below the horizon, but wretched habit won, and I crept to my berth. There was one pleasure more, however, for I straightway unfolded an oft-unfolded letter, and I read:

* Very dear Morris [it began—it really did]. This business of farming is too strenuous for one who likes long thoughts and long twilights. Eight guests, no maid, 500 quarts of cherries picked, packed, trucked and sold. And now the raspberries are on the fire.

I laughed when I wrote the check inclosed, and you must not be angry when it falls out. You see I wanted to give you a week-end on Lake Superior, since we could not have one together there, and I could not buy one at any of the shops near here. Will you take it? I'd like to have you as my guest up there. In fact

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the idea has pleased me mightily while I have been stemming the currants. Choose the nicest week-end you can. And there's only one string: you must tell me about it. And now back to the jam-pot. . . .

With a chuckle and a sigh I pulled out the light, and darkness rounded out the evening and the dawning morning that were the second day.

CHAPTER II

A CORNICE IN THE SKY

IT was early morning in Fort William when the *Assiniboia* slid into her haven with a distinguished gentleness. And it was not only early but raining. With that nameless depression which doubtless attacks cats on being driven from home, I left the ship, and accompanied the mist along the streets. Yestereve's elation had ebbed from me. I felt as if some witless act of mine had insulated me from good sense, yet I could not remember precisely what the act was. I knew now, however, that the fun of exploration was a fallacy exposed, and that I was the original gull to have believed the instigations of my fancy.

I found the hotel. It was being mopped, an operation which was doubtless seemly but also smelly. So, remembering the library, I journeyed thither. I arrived at eight; it opened at nine. I looked at the mist and then at the stone step. This was wondrous fun! Out in God's great open spaces, forsooth! The open spaces were in my own head. I thought of my genial friends at home who were wise enough to content

themselves with breathing the sweet pure air of clubs. Henceforth my little room should be wilderness enough for me. If an ashman had come by at that moment, I believe that I should have asked him to sweep me up and take me home to Lake Placid. Miss Mary Black little guesses how nearly I came to falling on her neck at that first meeting.

As it was I probably surprised her. I 'd been sitting there for half an hour like the mendicant I was, with hands outstretched, waiting for whatever the Almighty would drop into them, when a woman, slight and brisk, such as I have pictured Dorothy Wordsworth when walking with the poet, came swimming into my ken, and, because the fog was thick, almost into my arms. God's alms at last, thought I.

"I 'm not really on the town," I said, in response to her look of astonishment.

"But won't you come in and get warm anyway?" she said, smiling as much from her amused eyes as with her lips.

"At least until I 've thawed sufficiently to deliver a message from a Mr. Locke."

"That will be interesting," and she gave her head a characteristic tilt of inspection. "Very."

I handed her the card, and she remarked, "Anybody that George H. Locke commends shall be taken care of," whereupon she held out her

hand with a little independent welcome. "And what is more, I 've read your book, too."

An exclamation was surprised from my lips. "That makes three readers in Canada to my certain knowledge. It quite decides me to go on with this one I contemplate on Lake Superior."

"Then you *shall* be taken care of," she said. "It is waiting to be written about. You will find friends here."

I did not tell her that I thought I had found one already, for there 's some Scottish reserve in my blood, too; but we fell at once to discussing ways and means and places to see and people to meet and the history to be imbibed, until I fully understood that after five years of preliminary survey, a superficial knowledge of Fort William would begin to be obtained. I asked, with a sigh, where she would commence.

"Do you like walking?" she asked.

"As a tramp the cars."

"Then," she said, looking out of the window, "we might go up our mountain and take in the view."

My glance had followed hers into the opaque street. "The view?" I repeated not too politely. "Through *that*?"

"Oh, that," lightly, "is just our morning mist." Whereupon I realized that another trait of Scotland had not been betrayed. "If you care

to look about the library for a moment, I can be ready, and we 'll just run over home to tell father."

So I wandered out into the large room with its radiating shelves. A man of the world feels at home, I suppose, wherever there is a decanter; and a man of letters is instantly acclimated when he comes upon a row of books. I was now happy in Fort William. A town may well be judged by the library it keeps. And the library is the visible measure of the librarian. I knew that I had found a charming woman; now I was to discover a remarkable librarian. She had selected, with that divination which is culture, lines of titles that beckoned me to read, until I wondered what I had been at all these years. In one alcove, stood the best of Canada's literature, a surprising bulk; in another the boys and girls of high-school age could browse without being betrayed into stupidity; while on the walls were paintings by the younger Canadian artists. The bright symbols of intelligence and taste shone everywhere, and later, as I roamed the wide wilderness of Ontario with successive borrowings from these stacks in my pocket, I had occasion to be thankful to the men who had stood behind Miss Black as she created this refreshing oasis in the adjacent desert.

Across the way I was taken to meet the dearest

old man in carpet-slippers I have come to know. It required the summer for the knowledge to collect, for those to whom the thistle is a native flower do practise some self-denial when it comes to giving themselves away. That morning I became acquainted with a somewhat attenuated gentleman, rather soft and slow of speech, rather swift and keen of thought, a doctor by profession and a poet by temperament, who administered his drafts of life with a dry humor.

"Mary," he called to his daughter, who was doing up some lunch, "it looks inhuman out for walking."

"Father, father, don't give away our climate."

"But"—he turned to me—"do you really want to go?"

"Even fog pays its debts," I said, "and the most beautiful times of all are when a mist is breaking, a process which your daughter promises will come about."

"Well, there's this about it: whatever Mary promises she sees through."

So, lunch in hand, we left. A trolley brought us beyond a river where a road began that passed through an Indian village, whence a stiff, shaly trail began to climb. It led through a forest of hardwoods sprinkled with spruce and dripping with fog. My companion tripped up from ledge to ledge with the verve and elasticity of a hare

and seemed scarcely a younger sister to the womanly librarian; but I had no breath to dispel on compliments. Once she paused interrogatively, to see if I were along, and, seeing me still at it, was apparently reassured, for she did not pause again until we had come out on a ledge, where the Indians had erected a memorial for their tribesmen fallen on the fields abroad. The view was not yet, though the mist was beginning to show a yellow lining as if it were gathering up its skirts to depart.

"It will be ready for us," she said confidently, and darted again into the wood.

So we climbed for another half-hour through the silent forest, while, unknown to us, a breeze from landward was sweeping out the great valley for our view.

"Careful," she advised, "for if you slide down there you 'll be buried on Canadian soil."

"I 'm all for an American grave," I assured her, clinging harder to the slippery rock which brought us past a bottomless ravine to the last disastrous ledge.

"Well, this is the end," she said, coming out on a little spit of granite overhanging a stupendous gulf. Not to be outdone by woman, even if a Western one, I joined her on the perch, a mere cornice in the sky, and, leaning against the breeze, looked about the surrounding abyss, quite bereft

of exclamation. The mist was gone, was laughing at us from a soft couch of mackerel sky in heaven; and there, thirteen hundred feet below, lay a picture, or rather a hundred pictures merged and softened by the atmosphere into one sweeping scene of color. I gulped to get it before it was gone, for so suddenly had it broken on the eyes that they could scarcely believe that it would stay. Yet stay it did, and we sat cautiously down to take it in.

My first impression was that we were overhanging an enormous plain. Then I saw that the plain was cupped and tilted, making a magnificent bowl open toward the lake and the morning. There lay the twin cities of Port Arthur and Fort William, like a lively rag carpet thrown to sun on a terrace; and between them ran a green strip of no-man's-land which once had been a muskeg.

It was the lake that drew the eye. There shone Thunder Bay, fifteen miles across and twice as long, held within a circlet of giant hills, a landlocked, liquid blue. These hills running down from the soft horizon marched out in the east to form Thunder Cape, the outstretched 'sleeping Naniboujou of the Ojibway legends, forming a brother height to the Mount Mackay on which we lolled. And beyond the cape and bay stretched Lake Superior, a sheet of sleeping sunshine, the

widest, deepest, purest fountain of water in the world, the lonely, the original, the unspoiled.

A turn of the head showed a scene both lovely and majestic. Toward the southwest ran a succession of august bluffs overlooking the Kaministiquia, which is Ojibway for the River That Goes Far About. For reasonable nomenclature rely on the Indian. If you have ever seen an eel in transit, an eel discomposed by a touch of the colic, you can form an idea of this river's course. It flows hither and thither amazingly. But it looked naïvely charming as it ran through its little patches of blue-green wheat and of silver-green spruce, with an occasional brick-kiln flauntingly vermilion beside its blue. Beneath us stood stately grain-elevators, great gray pillars wherefrom Joseph of Israel could have fed all his Israelites for the seven lean years and had some over. Three hundred and fifty million bushels of wheat have gone through these ports in one year. Joseph, I reckon, would be astonished.

Miss Black was pointing out a ridge lying about fifty miles to the northwest. "The Height of Land," she said.

"Meaning that if it rains out of that little silver cloud yonder, the water will run into Hudson Bay?"

She nodded, adding, with Scotch caution, "Unless it is drunk up by the beavers."

We undid the lunch, a scant meal of tongue and lettuce sandwiches, olives and cake, fruit, a few sectors of pie with individual pints of milk, with a little chocolate, for which she apologized by inviting me to supper.

"I 've been looking for the fort," I said.

"There really was one, with cannon and lookout towers and a stockade. In fact there was nothing else until about 1860, save the mission erected by the Jesuits in 1848. Fort William was a camp, a starting-point of the trip into the northwest. In 1678 Du Lhut established a trading-post here; but the first actual residents unconnected with either post or mission were the McKellars. If you 'd care to come to the meeting of our little historical society to-night, you can hear about it from the pioneer's own lips."

"The founder of this place alive?" I exclaimed.

"Not quite the founder," she said, "but Peter McKellar has been greatly instrumental in its growth. His discoveries of silver, his efforts toward a suitable harbor, his perpetual public-spiritedness, have helped develop us from a canoe-landing into a place with a civic consciousness and twenty thousand people."

"How did Port Arthur happen?"

“The large boats could not get into the Kam here, and the mining operations necessitated wharfage, so a dock was built near the mouth of the Current River, over there; and the floating population of hunters and trappers, prospectors and what not came to a focus around the store which was opened near-by. There was a rebellion at Red River in 1870, you may remember, and Prince Arthur’s regiment was sent out, some of its companies being told off to do service under Colonel, afterward Lord Wolseley. Where they landed was called Prince Arthur’s Landing. They built roads for the soldiers, and the roads were handy for emigration later, which is roughly the why of the place. They have a beautiful site.”

“I suppose there ’s a good deal of rivalry between two cities so close?”

“Only superficially,” she said. “Here we are, two youngsters of cities hundreds of miles from any other, the natural gateway into the vast, still practically unpeopled West. We have the incitement of competition, of course, but we know that ours is a common destiny, and in really important matters join hands like brothers for the common good.”

I looked about me, refreshed by cheerful contrasts. The breeze that fanned us from the north

had left the nabitat of moose only ten minutes earlier. The fringe of men and women on this isolated beach of the great lake had but to open their back windows to hear wolves in winter. The town housewives were disturbed because the deer ate their lettuce, and one woman, whom I later met, declined to pick the radishes so long as a bear roamed the garden. Yet I had seen the library. I was to meet men beneath those roofs on which I looked who had assisted at coronations and who held high offices in the dominion. Where under the fixed arch of heaven could one find a more satisfactory combination of forest and fireside, sound comfort and civic culture? Or at least the possibilities of those? It was about the possibilities we talked, while the girl who had climbed with such brisk agility was changed back into a woman of affairs.

“There ought to be one statute on the books of both the cities,” I said finally, when I had found that the millennium had not quite arrived in either municipality. “Every citizen should be compelled to do a monthly pilgrimage up here on foot.”

“For inspiration?”

“For a sight of their true prosperity. Where there is no vision the people perish, you remember.”

“Beauty and business can be enjoyed together, can’t they?” she said. “Is that what you meant by our true prosperity?”

“I think I meant wholeness, or at least roundness. I like the idea of your financiers stepping outside the door to hunt, of your hunters buying poetry, and your poets erecting cabins with their hands. Every citizen ought to have a cloud-castle on this height.”

“You remind me of a bit of verse. I don’t know whether it is the whole poem, or even who wrote it, but it has always reinforced my own cloud-castles.

“Dreamer of dreams! We take the taunt with glad-
ness,
Knowing that God, beyond the years you see,
Hath wrought the dreams that count with men for mad-
ness
Into the substance of the world to be.”

I took a last look over my summer’s hunting-grounds. On the one side stood great, level-topped abutments, foundations for titanic edifices which had never been completed; before, lay the rural cities, ringed by the ancient hills; on the other side, the bay, the cape with its magnificent escarpments, and the blue, primeval lake. Here was a kingdom indeed.

CHAPTER III

THE FREEDOM OF THE PLACE

WHEN I was young and read the papers, I used to see that the Earl of Adam or the Maréchal of Bougainvillea had been tendered the freedom of the city on a silver salver. The mayor had made a speech, and the distinguished recipient had made a speech and then had pocketed the freedom. What he did with it I never could learn; but the phrase continued to mean a great deal to me. I used to imagine myself strolling down the avenue after the presentation until I arrived at heaven's gate, with "Huyler's" scrolled across it, and turned in, conscious but not too conscious of my new prerogative. Even in youth the refinement of pleasure is suspense, and I would hover over the aisles of sweetmeats while a dulcet but undiscerning shop-girl deposited the objects of my desire in a large box. It was full. It was wrapped.

"Ten dollars, please," said the poor woman.

"Excuse me," I would reply, "but I have the freedom of the city."

And if not that, I ask you, what could it mean? Was it merely a chance for speeches? If so, how undesirable! For nothing obtained either by the giving or receiving of speeches is, in my tongue-tied opinion, worth the price. We chatter too readily as it is, to require emoluments for encouragement. It is the racial disaster, is our hair-trigger tongue; and the rush of words from the head calls for a cure more radical than most diseases. Yet that bewitching phrase, the freedom of the city, lay unexplained in the store-room of my mind, until, long after the age of assorted chocolates, I came to Fort William and found it out.

Do not mistake my implication. I was granted no certificates, made no speeches, and listened to none. Not fifty Fort Williamites ever heard of me, and if there be a town band it never met me at the train. And yet, safe in that happy vault where I keep my dearest possessions, lies the assurance that the freedom of the place belongs to me, as well as to any others who drop in, congenially, on that delightful town.

I began to surmise this thing called hospitality at supper, where, on a foundation of tea and tarts, was erected a superstructure of conversation, an edifice of solid reminiscence with oriels of wit and an inlay of information for my benefit. Several friends had been 'phoned in,

and the atmosphere they brought was a clear fresh Western air. Supper talk in London is often political, in Philadelphia of people, in New York of the play; but that night a complete new set of topics was broached, and I heard for the first time gossip of trapping, of the perils of Superior, of the Mounties, and of the liberally abounding Indians. It was like opening a window to night air to hear them mention feats and endurances that made me marvel, mention them lightly and pass to others while I was still agog. I looked through the pauses of their conversation, as through a paling fence, into spaces greater than I had put my mind on before, spaces bare and full of hardship; yet when their voices began again, the discomfort of these lives that they were living melted away, and the figure of romance stood disincased from the hard reality.

There was Miss Carr-Harris, whose decidedly attractive person was informed by a striking mind. She had elected to travel among the Finns and Indians of the wilderness as a visiting nurse. Doubtless the directness of her glance armed her simply for her contact with the men of the bush. Here was the eternal womanly, indeed. She spoke of the absolute chivalry she encountered everywhere. She told stories that would send a railroad-tie a-gipsying, and as she described vividly the shanties of her wilderness I

pleased myself by comparing how they must have looked when she entered and when she went. I could well imagine the train of friendliness she left behind her, and the wonder is that she did not find all the men disposed to precipitate her sympathy. What vigils, what exposed journeyings, what concessions to an easier life refused, what cheer! On the walls of Miss Black's living-room were photographs of Greek sculptures. Once and again I raised my eyes from the tall animated nurse, to the tall statuesque goddess, and without sense of shock. There was a vitality in the sculptured calm, a calm in the stately living one that seemed to relate them. Both were strong and sensitive and brave. Yet I was glad to fancy, during my third cup of tea, that this Hebe of the wilderness was abler and more kind than that matron whose slaves accompanied her before the Parthenon. Those who keep sighing that our civilization is an irreparable mistake have not collected all the data.

Then there was Captain McCannel of the *Assiniboia*, big, gentle, with infinite integrity obvious on his face. I like the old saying that the gods we worship write their names across our faces. Most of us live in divided houses, but now and then we come on one who is the master in his heart, and his face is good to look on. Such was the shrewdly honest, humor-loving

countenance of McCannel. He had not only run off to sea on the lake, but had stayed on it, and the stories he could not tell are worth small place in the archives. He had seen the transition from all sail to all steam, and, until he was captain, had participated in many a wreck. I was amazed to hear of the fearful, fascinating calamities, and the supply did not run out before it was time to go to the historical meeting.

Mr. Peter McKellar greeted us, and in him I met Fort William's premier pioneer, prospector, and perfect gentleman. In the year that General Lee had essayed Gettysburg, Mr. McKellar had come to town, then consisting of the post and the mission and a wreath of wigwams. As frontiersmen go, the Lord had made him little, with a gentle voice, keen eyes, and a just spirit. How anybody under six foot five could survive on the frontier of those days is a question to postpone. Peter McKellar did, and more than survive, held his own, surveyed, and discovered silver.

This much I knew; now he withdrew me into his den, for which I was devoutly glad, and hence I was transported by a word into those early sixties. Here was a marvelous memory. He had the dates of things like an almanac, and the significance of them, too, which was better. He told me about the turning of the first sod for the Canadian Pacific on June 1, 1875.

“Yes, yes,” he said eagerly, “on the bank of our river here, that was the beginning. They had determined to span the continent from Cape Breton to Vancouver’s Island, and they thought it best to start that tremendous operation in the heart of the country in order to make use of our eighteen hundred miles of waterway. That was a time of great national faith and pluck. I remember looking at the pile of wheelbarrows and shovels by Adam Oliver, who was cutting the sod, and thinking it strange and good that with such homely utensils we should actually bring about the fulfilment of this thing we had scarcely dared to dream.”

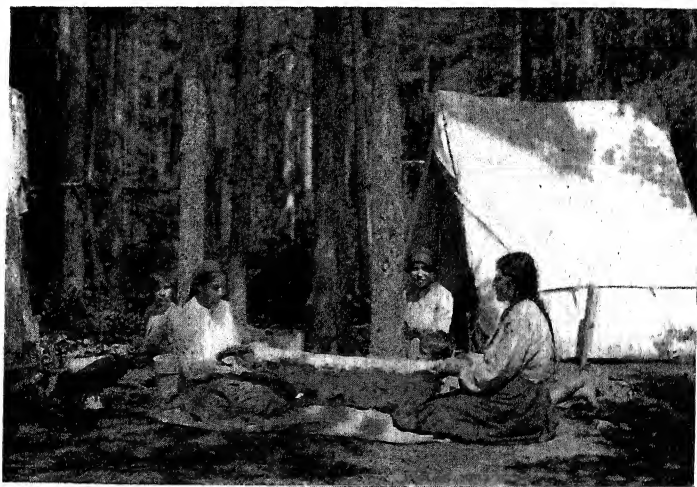
There was a gentleness in his voice which bade one listen twice to his words when speaking of his own exploits. I asked him to tell me of the old-time incidents.

“To be an old-timer,” he said, “you had to be living in the fort in the days when the post was brought by dog-train from Duluth. You can imagine that the time hung heavy somewhiles. It was during the long winter of seventy-four that we determined to start a newspaper. To be sure there was no press, no type, but we had ink and pens, and so we got out an eight-page affair we called ‘The Triweekly Perambulator,’ stating that its object was to maintain the present Government in power and to enlighten



Courtesy of F. A. Waugh & Canadian Geological Survey

CREE SNOWSHOE MAKER



Courtesy of F. A. Waugh & Canadian Geological Survey

DOESKIN

the world as to Fort William's resources. Our rivals of Prince Arthur's Landing across the way were still illiterate, and so a copy of the 'Perambulator' was sent trundling over the ice on its mission of education and love. Slight mutterings in the air were heard, succeeded by more mutterings, which suddenly culminated in their paper entitled 'The Thunderbolt,' whose object as announced was the unmaking of governments and the commendation of Prince Arthur's Landing to the world, and particularly to the engineers of the Canadian Pacific. The din of it reached fully as far as Silver Islet there by the cape, and at the center of this area of strife the uproar was fierce." Here Mr. McKellar chuckled, saying: "One unalterable convention of the artist staffs was to picture the rival village as being wiped out of existence; and probably the whistle of the first boat sounded none too soon that spring. But the 'Thunderbolt,' like most, was more noise than anything else, and we—"

Just here Mrs. McKellar came in. "Peter, they are ready."

"In a moment, dear," he said, and the president of the historical society turned again to his youth, to my joy; for I had now a ripened inclination to listen to him for the rest of the night.

"Dear, dear, what a lot you have brought to

mind!" he said. "We lived stirringly enough in those days, what with Riel Rebellions, and mining ventures, and predictions, and competitions for harbors and railways, and Silver Islet, and the coming of the wheat." And he had begun to tell me of an adventure far up on Lake Nipigon, where he was surveying for the Government, an adventure comprising balky Indians and famine and the dangers of a vanished epoch, when they called him again, and I was introduced to society.

We are fond of hearing that human nature is everywhere the same. This generalization is as weighted with meaning as to say that the English alphabet is everywhere the same. So it is. But how dissimilar are its uses! Shakspeare, Swinburne, and Simple Simon all spoke the same tongue, but with how varying an effect! And suppose they did manage to say the same thing, there would remain the style to fix an eternal gulf between, the style being the manner of the man made visible. And so in that room I had the manner of the place made clear to me. As each contributor to the evening spoke, he spoke for himself, for his topic, and for Fort William, though he probably would not have boasted of being such an oracle. And I came to see Fort William's limitations together with the promises of exceeding them. On the bedrock

of existence these men and women had already laid down a considerable soil of civilization from which the true flora of culture would grow. I contrasted this sturdy budding from generosity of heart and integrity of spirit with the topsy-turvy proceedings in my East, where ambitious younglings, unconscious that there is a bedrock of existence, display the window-boxes of their affectations, and then lament that the universe has been misconstrued when their parasitic pansies begin to wither away. Virtue is strength, as it was in the days when Romulus and Remus were weaned from wolf's milk; and given sufficient span, I would back these men and women I listened to that night against a far more sophisticated society to effect the things that endure. For they were persons, concealing nothing, boasting nothing; a stanch catholic manhood, rather rough-hewn, and rather noble. I found western Ontario so new, so sparsely populated, that only the strong could hold up the heavens, which, with us, are shared by many shoulders. In each village there was a strong man, and inevitably I found that he in turn was sustained by character. Hudson's Bay factor, mounted policeman, storekeeper, librarian, sky-pilot, railroad official, visiting nurse, or game protector, these were doing their hard but well-liked duty, honestly and with a forgiving humor

that made them look like the rest until you took a closer look. Just arrived from a society where living was easier and there were more leaners against its props, this independent crowd was singularly refreshing. It seemed the salt of the earth, indeed, if the rock-salt.

Since this is not to be an annual report of that historical society, I'll have to refrain from spreading out into Captain McCannel's talk on the lake, or Mrs. Sherk's Indian legends wherein I heard about Naniboujou, the god who was to divert my fortunes for a day; nor shall I relate Colonel Young's concern about saving some Indian pictures which were weathering away from some cliffs near-by. But I must tell one incident at the close. Mr. Peter McKellar was under the illusion that he was getting old and should resign from the presidency. He tried to explain this supposition, whereupon there was such an outburst of affection that I could see through the seams in the formal surfaces of these people into strange depths of tenderness. It was all over in five minutes. They rose in their love and replaced him in the chair, and the party adjourned for ice-cream. But as I write this, months after, I glow to remember those moments of the living fire which burns in the heart of humanity, when an old man was made happy and

the chill of age held off from him by the untroubled young.

If anybody imagines that frontier folk retire with their fowls, let him try to go to bed in Fort William. Having deposited my duffle at the hotel at seven that morning, and the hour being now eleven, I thought it was a day. But at that moment I was introduced to Mr. Charles Edward Stewart, a black-eyed, black-haired, hero-of-fiction-like man, who suggested to Miss Black and me that, since it was nearly midnight, and since in the house where he and Mrs. Stewart lived there was a ghost, the house being nothing less than the old Jesuit mission, as also some home-made wine of the saskatoon berry, which Mrs. Stewart had stayed at home to set out, it would be clearly fitting for me to see the ghost, the mission, and the missis setting out wine. He added that his car was at the door.

There is to be a great deal about Charles Edward Stewart and his vehicles in this book, and so further delineation can wait. The combination offered was too formidable to be resisted and we went. In the car I found an authority on mission history, whom Mr. Stewart was dropping at her home, which lay in the shadow of the mountain. She was a little lady, with almost pinched features but a fine brow, and as I listened

to her gentle voice and caught glimpses of her severely plain black dress, I could easily make believe that I was listening to one of that zealous sisterhood, which went adventuring so modestly for souls.

"I have often wondered," she said, "why there was no mission here until 1848. My people followed the voyageurs into these forests in the sixteen hundreds. Perhaps it was too far; perhaps Father Marquette had his hands full nearer home. At any rate not until nearly two hundred years after the first trading-post here did the Fathers Frémiot and Choni arrive. They found a very pagan lot. When told about the blessings of Christ, they would say, "But what medicine-man will cure our children if we accept the white man's prayer?" or sometimes turn away with a "That 's good; I thought so," over the shoulder. There was a particularly pagan chief, old Peau de Chat, who held out against all persuasions. It discouraged Father Frémiot. "I have tempted all with the faith," he confided to his superiors, "but their only response is to burn our chapel down."

Unfortunately Miss Eugenia Robin had to get out before we arrived at the end of the story. I have yet to discover the romance bristling with more murders and magnanimity, courage and the devil's accomplishments, than the story of the

Results in Canada as related by the master raconteur, Francis Parkman. Miss Black took up the threads and reported how in ten years they had arrived at comparative peace and a considerable congregation, when Mr. Stewart exclaimed, "And this is where it was," and we dismounted at the very scene of Father Frémiot's chagrin.

It was a stone structure rising dimly in the night from the steep brink of the river, and its severe lines led one to prepare for something especially devout inside. But, alas, the Stewarts will never do where solemnity is demanded. I met my hostess of many meals to be, a jolly, brisk housewife, very active for other people's pleasure. Soon the essence of the saskatoon berry was passed around, until the tales of the fathers, whose diet had been fish, with potatoes on a festival, seemed more and more chimerical and absurd.

"Sshh!" said Mrs. Stewart, suddenly, "there's the ghost." We subsided as abruptly as we could, but whatever it was that went rustling down the hall, its footfalls were obscured by the clock above the piano striking twelve.

"Now that is too bad," said Mrs. Stewart; "we should have left the door open a crack. You must come to-morrow. Why are you sticking that pin in your arm?"

"To see if this be really me," said I, "a stranger in a strange place and yet at home, a chap who knows that the report of ghosts is inconstant, obscure, uncertain, and fallacious, as La Hontan says of Tradition, yet who heard one, or at least—"

"Is it so stupid, gross, and rustic?" said Miss Black, "quoting from your La Hontan again, to visualize the spirits that have once breathed and worked and agonized in a place? I think it is most intelligent. My library is full of such. For what is a book but the apparition of a spirit? Let us have ghosts."

"They are very little trouble, surely," said Mrs. Stewart, "especially when they have regular habits like ours. But I don't see why they should be so shy."

"Consult your own inner self," I suggested. "Can you catch it except in its simpler acts? At my best, I am quite intangible, unreal, a sort of independent shadow of something brightly veiled. I am glad there is so much ghostly left to hear and to see."

"And speaking of seeing things," said Mr. Stewart, obviously relieved to be back to earth, "we must show you our falls. How about to-morrow afternoon?"

"Which to-morrow do you mean?" I asked, pointing to the clock.

“That ’s so; it is to-day,” he said.

“And there ’s no time like the present,” said Mrs. Stewart.

“So why should n’t we run out now and see them by moonlight?”

“Is there a moon?” said Miss Black.

“Half an old one,” said Mr. Stewart, “and it ’ll be dawn in a couple of hours, anyway. You can’t say no, Miss Black.”

“I *have* an aversion to the word,” she said laughing.

“And I ’ll just put in a coffee-pot,” added Mrs. Stewart.

CHAPTER IV

KAKABEKA FALLS

ACCORDINGLY, at two of the night, with the sear and yellow moon over our left shoulder, and a sleeping beauty all about us, we went forth to our adventuring. If people could only surmount their invincible distrust of the unplanned, what gusty and valiant horizons they would find opening all around, and what fun just the first turn from the commonplace! There was a time, as Masefield vouches for,

When the white clover opened Paradise
And God lived in a cottage up the brook,

which is the loveliest statement of picnic simplicity that I have ever come across.

We soon were lost, an admission intended to be no reflection on Charles Edward, but a compliment on the choicely rural location of Fort William. There are few cities so enviably plumped into the wilderness. Unless you motor with a cord attached to the car in the manner that Theseus kept orientated in the Minotaur's gardens, you get inextricably bewildered upon

emerging from the gates; and I call this being happily suburban.

But the roads were good, and Mr. Stewart kept the general direction by the moon, and we whirled like dervishes down highways which we knew had been intended to take us somewhere.

That wizard of a moon had cast a spell on Mount Mackay, making it august, the throne of rulers, a divinity itself. A slight mist from the river buried the clay feet of this stern god, whose bulk was lost in a deeper darkness and whose head was bright with a veil of sheerest silver. Men reverence mountains because they are a parable of the human heart, their greatness born of upheaval, their permanence an illusion, their condition loneliness, and their night a closeting with stars. It is easy to personify them, and it was easy to think of this abrupt eminence as the guard and sentinel of the country round about.

"If I could only tell the tale of the ages as he has seen them," said Miss Black, "it would make good reading. Do you realize that this spot is second only to Quebec in historic interest?"

"How so?" said I.

"Well, before the Indians there lived here practical people who knew a copper-mine when they saw it. They doubtless roved thus far from Isle Royale, where we have sure proof that they

lived and mined. Then for some reason they came no more, and the Indians hunted here, and this river became their highway. They used Mackay as an altar, lookout, and fire-alarm, until, in the days when Charles the Second was giving balls in Buckingham Palace, Daniel Greysolon Du Lhut, which they changed to Duluth, arrived here, preceded by rumor and followed by fur-traders. The Indians called the lake Kitchi Gama then, meaning Big Sea Water. Father Allouez simplified this to Lac Tracy, but in a few years they began calling it the Upper Lake Supérieur, as distinguished from Huron, the lower. Jacques de Noyon induced his king to authorize posts at Kaministiquia, Rainy River, and the Lake of the Woods; but the French, being always slow to see an advantage, postponed building a fort here until 1717. La Verendrye came after that. Then they discovered the shorter route west by Grand Portage and Pigeon River, and this place was nearly deserted until the North-West Fur Company came into being and, after your War of Independence, reëstablished the main route to the interior by the Kam.

“Then it was that old Mount Mackay saw the liveliest times. There was a war on between the North-West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company. The fort was strengthened and called Fort William after William MacGillivray, and

they absorbed all the companies to the west. Stores sprang up, and a huge banqueting-hall resounded with the wassailings of the officials of the company, who came with servants and viands for the revels. They were great days. Irving tells about them in his 'Astoria.' It was then that the mountain's name was changed from Anamikiewakchu to Mackay. There followed fights between the N.-W. Company and Lord Selkirk's colonists, and the de Meurons came, and finally the mountain looked down on a great peace, when the N.-W. Company was absorbed by the Hudson's Bay in 1821. Even then romance did not perish, for the men were still of the sort whose only fear was that they might die in their beds. Don't you think our mountain is almost a second citadel?"

"I believe it touches me closer yet," I replied, having instantly before me a picture of that great dead past in Quebec. "Over there rises the ghostly beauty of things gone; but here one feels the organic motion of the heart. Here life is in the new. French days belong to history. A race, a literature, a religion, an art, a man's life, must base itself on fundamentals to endure. Do those French Canadians still seek truth? Do they yearn for sincerity? Do they keep a covenant? Do they know a God? Do they recognize Nature, or confuse her with paper flowers?"

History will tell. History is always for the wise and rigorously virtuous. It was not by chance that a dozen fathers conquered a wild Canada, which a godless king, with a thousand regiments, soon lost. Judging from the temper of the people I have met, this mountain still has great sights in store."

"I think I could back up your belief with figures from our library," she said softly, "if this were not so beautiful."

It was not only beautiful now but exciting, for we were speeding down an incline which led, or seemed to lead, into a purple nothingness, when, with a flourish, Mr. Stewart saved us from space and brought the car parallel to a brink. In a nightmare one would not have stopped; that was the difference.

We got out into the moonlight, a yellow ancient moonlight, and took a step; and there, over a cliff higher than Niagara's, was pouring a wide river in an unearthly flood. A dark water issued from the night and leaped outward in a superb abandon, changing, as it fell, to light. The Naiads were riding white horses that plunged ahead, neck to neck, in a thunderous race. They streamed into the eery cañon and were swallowed up, but not before their white manes and the Naiads' hair shone with a faint moon-bow. And all the while the softened hoof-beats of the

interminable charge played on the ear above the thunder of their doom. It filled the pulse with a strange leaping, to see them, to hear them. This was more gripping than all music. This was Pan caught unawares.

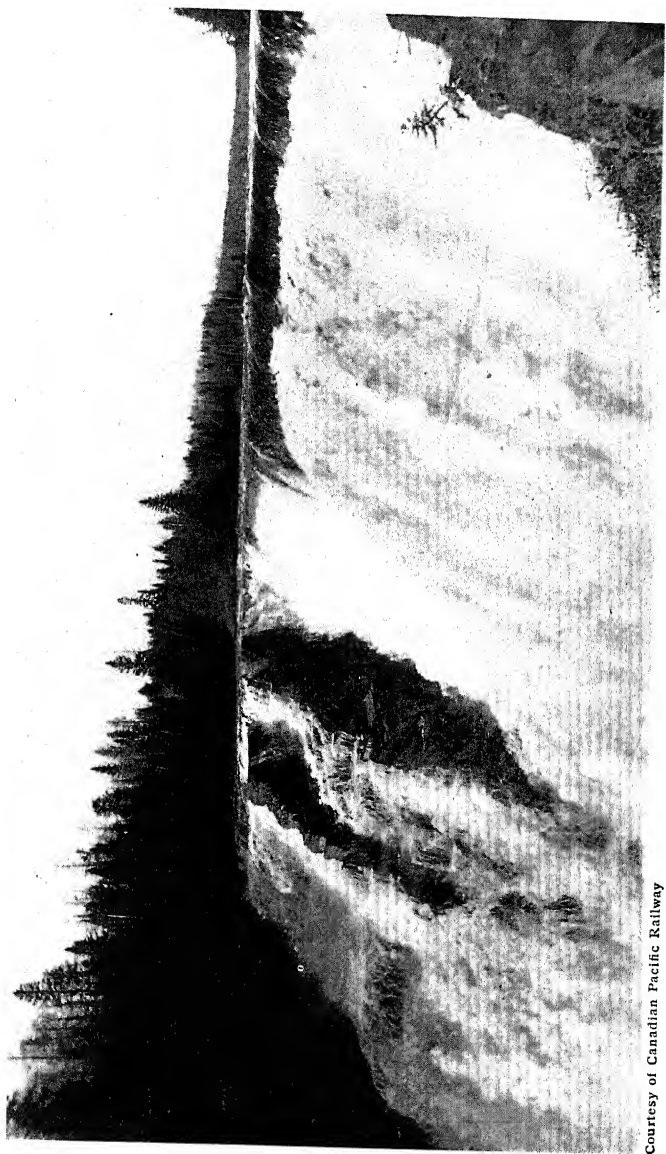
It was a long while before we could leave that first sight to follow the wild cavalcade to its further fortunes. We walked to a treeless point and peeped down, down where the river glittered from a deep cañon. Here all was stillness. The moonshine faltered at this last step, except in a gentler place or two where the course widened, showing dead foam and ranks of cord-wood stranded at a turn.

And suddenly Miss Black touched my arm and pointed, and high overhead I saw faint arrows of cloud, their feathers tinged with dawn, shooting at some celestial mark. A glow, so delicate as to seem just the perfume of color, spread behind the sleeping spruces, and strengthened while we stared. Gray lights spotted the mosses at our feet. Softly but steadily the color grew to rose, to coral, to flame, and old necromancer Moon paled to see his wiles discovered. A whitethroat sparrow woke within his bush, and down an alley of the wood came a crow's voice sounding like the forest's milkman. The spell was breaking. When we returned to our first point of view the Naiad riders had disappeared,

the falls had disappeared. Remained the gaping, dripping cañon with a single rill. This time I thought I had seen things. I turned to Charles Edward to see if he, too, was just an apparition. But he was there. "They use the water for power on week-days," he explained. "What do you say to a little breakfast?"

So it was over. I had had one of the glorious thrills of my life, one of those rushing hours of unforgettable beauty. Still unwilling to talk, we found a streamlet, kindled a few sticks, and had the coffee simmering beside the frying bacon; and with food came thoughts again.

I wondered why I had never heard of these falls before, which the Indians euphoniously called Kakabeka. But I was glad that I had not seen them advertised; for it has become my private axiom that almost everything much advertised is bad. If not all men, then all advertisers are liars, one thinks in one's wrath. Especially untrammelled by any rein of truth is the booster of place, the paid braggart of scenery. The advertiser bloweth where he listeth, and the places he blows about the public rush to see. He can send whole populations to a raw play by the use of a few adjectives in black type. He is conscience free. He sells salt and sanctity and sight-seeing and snappy stories by an indiscriminate use of the same superlatives, perverting the



KAKABEKA FALLS

Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

twenty-third Psalm to make a point on the market. He debases the noblest of all languages, and lays waste natural wealth to foist doped goods on a gullible public. The ax is being laid to the trunks in our last forest, and it is wielded by the hand of the advertiser. That is the stunning half-truth of the matter; and I was glad that no unsparing gush had raised my hopes too high about these falls. Conversely, I hope I raise the hopes of none. That they are a Sunday falls only, must be said. I saw them again by sunshine, and they were very beautiful, but Pan and his white-maned runners raced not then. Still under their spell—or was it sleep?—we rambled back to town, and I cannot say whether we lost the way or not.

CHAPTER V

A PRIVATE INTERLUDE

NEXT morning, when my eyes unclosed on the customary thing in ceilings, I remembered that I was in a hotel. From my window I could see a narrow sliver of Lake Superior shining between two too solid rows of brick. An objurgation crossed my lips, and I swore by Nani-boujou, the god of these parts, that I would oust this thorn of civilization from my flesh before I slept again. Had I not been trundled a thousand miles, smothered in berths and state-rooms and hotels, and tossed from baggageman to room-clerk, in order to see Lake Superior? Why loiter? So I rose and leaned against the wall, telephone to ear.

“Mornin’, Miss Black,” I said; “I ’m desperate.”

“Then confined, I hope.”

“Desperate because confined. I ’m going to break loose from history and the things I ought to see and do a little fishing. Now what ’s the finest river you ’ve got handy?”

“The Nipigon. That ’s easy.”

"Do you think the people we were to have tea with will speak to me again if I go?"

"I 'm reasonably certain. I 'll explain."

"You have the angels stopped for being gracious," said I, and meant it; and, dressing in some chummy clothes that were to see me through many a scrape, boarded the C. P. R. for Nipigon.

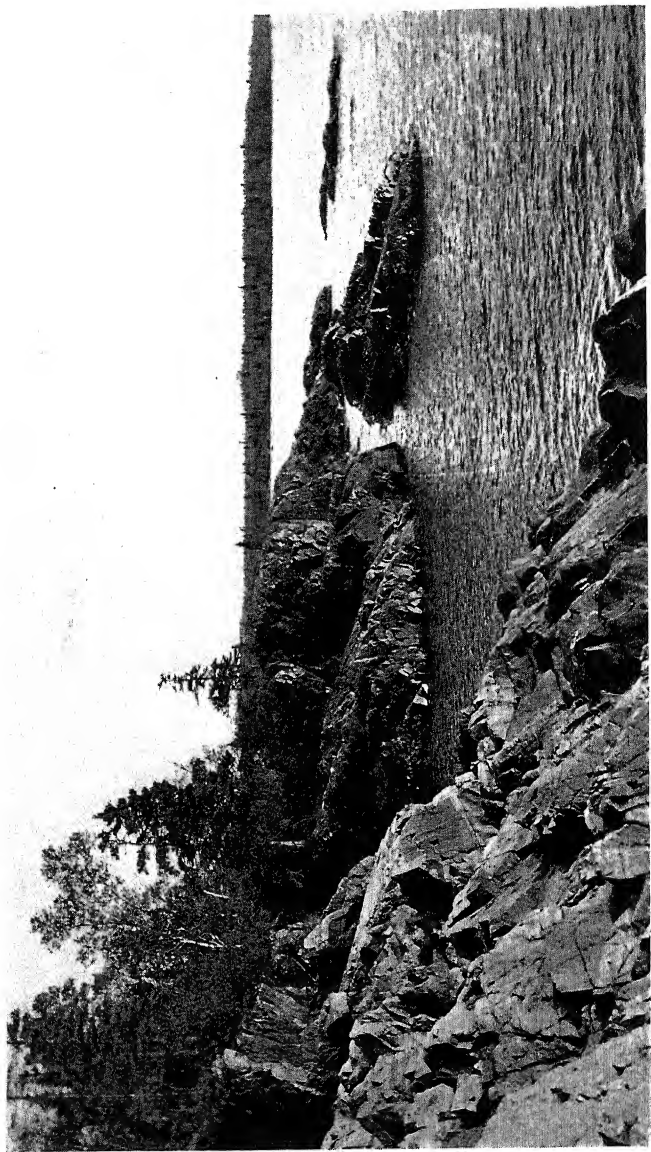
The train was itself an interesting phenomenon of this new land, a sliding social scale beginning with the colonist car and ending with the compartment observation. I wondered where I, in knickers, with a song in my heart and trout-flies in my hat-band, belonged. The drowsy rustics in the front and the dormant rich in the rear called forth snobbish sentiments, for I felt particularly indisposed to descend to the earth with the former or be approved by the lifeless dignity of the latter. There was the dining-car next, and the waiters looked genial, but it was early. The standard sleepers chanced to contain only well-dressed ladies, and that was too much like re-reading the old book. There remained the first-class coach where the fugitive chiefly ride. Their minds are unsettled by schedules, the pleasantness of their faces often disguised by cinders or qualified with lingering crumbs. But in the tourist sleeper I found asylum. Here were the élite poor, genial old ladies who made up for a lack of grammatical forms by a largess of humor,

elder sons visiting the old home back East, a wave of children flowing up the aisle now and then, but clean children, and a spruce porter to maintain heaven's first law. I saw no drummers: I sat down.

It was while looking at the folder that I found out my mistake. The Nipigon read all right, but it was too far inland. I had given my oath to Naniboujou that I would know his lake, and here I was speeding by it. The train was sweeping around long curves following the bright edge of the lake, which lapped crystallly against the sun-warm shelves of rock. It might turn inland at any moment. At one stop I went out for air, and found that it had that soft persuasive quality which we of Pennsylvania associate with April and we of Lake Placid hope for in hither June. Would it last? Would a divinity so slighted continue to smile? At the next stop I sniffed at the sunshine again and collaborated with the conductor, who would have been an equal success as an innkeeper, so thoroughly did he understand one.

"I know what you want," he said. "Just a place to loaf for a day, and take a dip, though you 'll find it cold, and a bite to eat. I get that way myself after looking at three or four hundred miles of such water."

And so, at the next place, the engine and I both



Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

SCENE OF THE PRIVATE INTERLUDE

stopped for water, only it went on with the train and I did not. I was to have one long uninteruptible day by myself with Lake Superior; for long ago I had learned that there is no getting of experience by proxy. To square things with Naniboujou, I was to seek his lake and the spirit thereof; with myself, to search my heart and take account of things. For these operations the situation was uniquely suitable. It consisted of one water-tank, one operator's office, and one wilderness. In this last I proceeded to make myself at home.

The more sharply I looked about me the more clearly I observed how the spot accorded with my notion of a place exactly suitable for contemplation and bathing. Trains and trouble and even time itself were no more. Numberless noons had whitened the private beach, which began and ended in great lakeward-peering boulders. A screen of cedar and birches backed the tiring-room, and through some poplars a breeze slipped with the sound of lapping water. The lake was calm. It seemed to be but a tangible green shadow of the air. I stripped with a boy's haste. Although midday, the Sleeping Giant was still asleep.

The sand at the water's edge felt cool; so I rehearsed my swim by dipping a toe into the lake. The toe was frozen off; I hopped back on

the other foot. Then I began to remember the sayings I had heard about Superior; how it refused to give back the bodies of those whose lives it had taken, how a man sufficiently immersed became a sacrifice to the god; and I began to believe them. Here was the original source of ice-water. Who was I to ruin so much good drink by drowning in it? Then I thought of Nani-boujou. If I showed the white feather now, he would certainly upset my canoe some time, and deservedly. So I climbed the boulder, gazed down into that other atmosphere which faded into its twilight of arctic green, and dived.

I dived out, too. Probably nobody ever emerged from water with such rapidity. But when little by little the blood uncoiled from my heart and began timidly seeking my limbs again, I noticed that I had come to life, it seemed to a better one. The sun caressed my body, its light my mind. A compact sense of well-being, that lyric harmony of body and spirit, of the senses and the aspirations, permeated me. I thought of the prayer which Socrates offered before his friend Phædrus: "Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who here abide, grant me to be beautiful in the inner man, and all I have of outer things to be at peace with those within. May I count only the wise man rich. And may my store of gold be such as none but the good can bear."

What an exquisite joke, thought I, to have that saying carved above the entrance to the banks in New York City!

Then it occurred to me that perhaps I ought to add a rider for Naniboujou, seeing that this lake was chiefly his domain, and so I said: "August Naniboujou, and whatever lesser gods mayhap be listening, give me good hunting. Give me good hunting in which the quarry is myself. Set friendly wigwams along my proper trail, and lend me strength to brush aside those whisperers who would entice me therefrom. Grant me success in war, and the scalps of those who would despoil thee. Make mine eye clear as thy lake, and as instant to mirror beauty. Keep my limbs fit and my heart light for the long journey, and smoke the thoughtful pipe with me at the end of day."

For response Naniboujou deputed a flock of little birds to make answer from the brake, and when I had received their token I donned my B. V. D. breech-clout and set about kindling a fire for lunch. I had got it under way, too, before the thought occurred that a broiled trout would not only be a tasty addition to toast and cheese and tea, the rations I am never out of, but also a proof of the tales of wayside fish which the patrons of the lake had poured into my ear. So I put together my rod and went up the beach

a way till I found a streamlet entering. Just beyond where its prattle was lost in the lake silence, a reef of rocks was arranged for casting.

That was an exquisite moment. A little breeze darted here and there over the water, like a dragon-fly settling on the lake when weary. But the great bird of day had folded his wings and drowsed. So would trout be drowsing. The sun drowned the water. Yet there is always one chance, and who would not have gambled half an hour on the forlornest foolishness at such a time? Life was all silver joy, whatever one did. So I cast, and cast again upon the impossible lucidity, and on the third try lay the brown one where an eddy curled behind a rock. It was taken, taken down, taken to sea, and that thrill, from the mystic cave of thrills inside one, ran trippingly up my spine. Naniboujou, I said, I'll thank you when I have time.

This shall be no fish-story, no page-long recital of a superhuman tournament with a Sir Lancelot of the Lake, in which, after a tedious struggle of hours—or is it days?—the enfeebled fisherman calls for the windlass and drags his prey to land. Mine was a child trout, barely a pound, and he made almost no objection to coming ashore. But he was a sweet child, too, and when I'd finished him, and made a back for myself,

and lit Friend Pipe, nothing that I had done in life seemed adequate for this gift. Perhaps I should be asked for the price at the close. Very well, no demand could be exorbitant, and I let my leisurely thoughts make inventory.

The rest of that day shall be mine, and mine alone. But the arriving at my bungalow that night is too good to keep.

Finally the day-lit evening softened into dark, and the train came and stopped for water, and I got on, contented. Whatever happened now could not obliterate the past. At midnight the train stopped at Nipigon, and I and my duffle-bag disembarked. I'd read my folder and knew what I wanted to do.

"Can you direct me to the Canadian Pacific's bungalow-camp?"

"You should have asked them to stop at the far side of the bridge. There's a special station there," I heard.

"Is it far?"

"Not much over half a mile. You'll find the station; then a road takes you in. It goes through a bit of woods."

"I'll find it all right," said I, shouldering the duffle-bag and starting down the road with heart still high. It was as dark as Tophet before the fires were lit, for a scum of clouds had hid the stars, but I stumbled along fairly well. When

my informant had mentioned the bridge I had visualized a bridge and nothing less. When I reached the trestle I saw an airy structure leading out over nothing at all, the most striking feature of which seemed its insecurity.

Now, my duffle-bag contained everything for my household needs during a summer, an autumn, and perhaps a winter. It was heavy enough on terra firma, but to balance out there with it on a thin veil of railroad-ties was more romantic than reasonable. Yet I was ashamed to go back, so, striking a safe pace and determining to take one tie at a time, I struck boldly into the abyss and in a few minutes had lost sight of land.

I have never read whether this trestle is the longest one in the world, but I should say so roughly. After I 'd borne that bag far enough to have crossed the Mississippi, I heard a gentle roaring coming. Mercy! thought I, a train. But it got no louder, and presently I realized that the roar was coming from below, being also echoed from invisible cliffs. It was the river which this trestle had set out to cross. I could just make out a ghastly whitishness below, the Nipigon.

I kept on. I passed a platform with a barrel on it. A really thoughtful railroad would have put a restaurant here, said I. But on I kept, cautiously. Caution is the infinite capacity

for escaping pains, and is therefore the antithesis of genius. But it was no time to be a genius, and though I would give friends, plans, and whatever credit I can assemble to fetch the laggard Muse, I do wish to retain my ankles. So I crawled slowly back to earth with only passing references to the poetry of that situation.

The station was there, and the road turned into a forest, as the official had said it would, but he had said nothing about the dark. It was as black in there as a water-main and nearly as damp; and I could only guess that I was advancing by listening to the splash. It disturbed the silence of the night, but worse, it irritated the mosquitos. And then the climax! The road forked. It was rather late to begin to explore, particularly as the province of Ontario is so spacious. And it was too wet to sleep where I stood. Only one incident remained to complete the disaster— wild animals, preferably wolves. And then it was that I heard one coming.

I shouldn't have taken all that trouble with the trestle, thought I, if I'd known that I was going to be eaten. That wolf certainly was coming. I heard a soft pattering through the puddles. According to rule I should soon see two yellow eyes staring from the dark. And sure enough, there they were, at least one of them. A wolf, but semi-blind, said I, and tried

to decide how to receive it, when just then it stubbed its toe and said, "Damn." I struck a match. There stood an Indian before me, a young buck dressed in his best, a jaunty felt hat on his black hair, and the glint of a smile in his steady eyes.

"Did you know I was here in the dark?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Do you know why?"

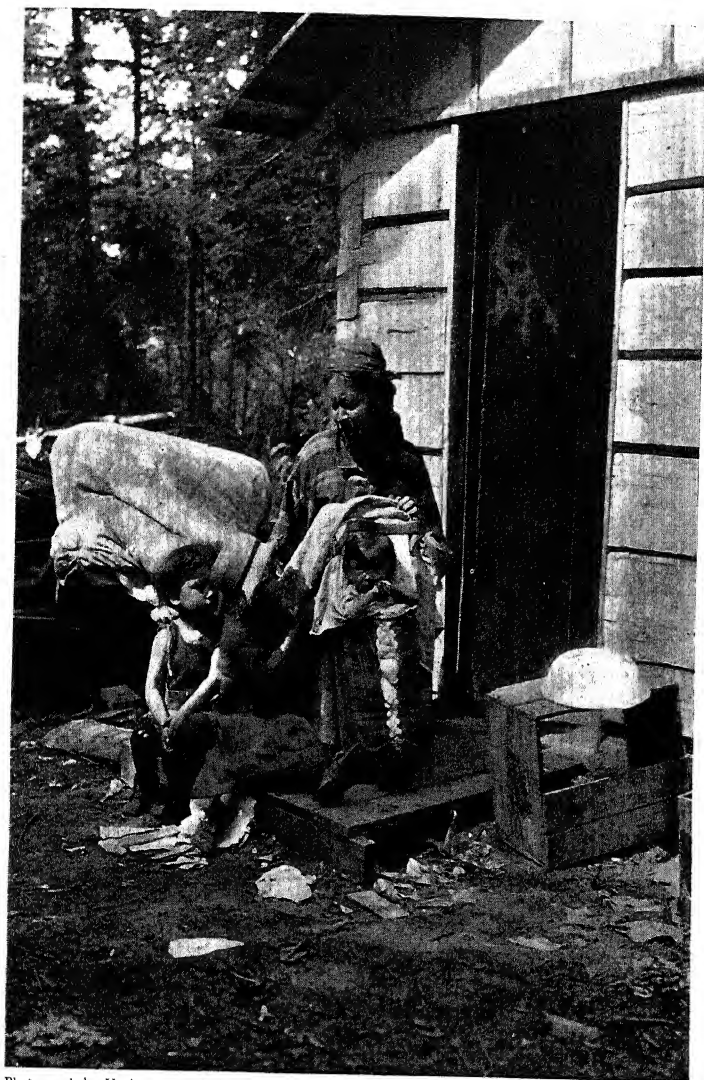
"No."

"I 'm trying to find where they 've hidden the camp."

A grin exposed faultless teeth and he said, "I show you."

"If you 'd been smoking two cigarettes I 'd 've been sure you were a wolf," I continued, offering him a fresh one. In the match-light it was not hard to observe that he was in courting togs. "I see it is the mating-season," said I.

"Maybe it is," he said with a quiet laugh, and, picking up my bag, brought me in a moment to a bluff, whereon stood the dim bulks of bungalows. "I 'll see if this is all right," he said, and stole up the steps stealthily. Perhaps he smelled the lack of occupants. At any rate he switched on a light, and out of the dark burst the dainty outline of a bachelor bungalow, spick and span, new and odorous with cedar. Had he



Photograph by H. Armstrong Roberts

PART OF THE FAMILY

been Aladdin he could have done nothing better. Five minutes ago I had been lost, lonely, and morassed; here was repose, privacy, and a mosquito-netting.

“I live down there,” said the Indian.

“Will you be free to-morrow?”

“I am always free,” he said. “Good night.”

CHAPTER VI

HOUSING THE BLUE

ETHEREAL beauty can be had at any time by one who wills, but practical beauty is rare; as rare as to find the song and exuberance of larks caged with the bird itself. And so with the wilderness. It is there for anybody who can pack a canoe, or who can match its demands with equal strength. But who can bring the wilderness into the home?

Well, to be honest, not even the greatest travel bureau can. For the joys of the wilderness are untamable, incommunicable joys, and a man must experience for himself its play of color, its lonely reaches, and its mystery. His senses, sharpened to ecstasy, know their gratification only through his own effort. He cannot have solitude with servants, nor find the hills of silence in a train.

But if you will grant Christopher Morley that the blue can begin in your cellar furnace, perhaps you will grant me that a modified blue can be served housed to those who need it, who earnestly desire it and can appreciate it, but

through some lack of strength or opportunity are unable to make the necessary sacrifices to the red gods. The housed blue, like the caged lark, is comparatively a broken thing, but if it has been handled very carefully, if the spirit has not been subordinated to the matter, something of the original can be sensed. Thrice before I had found a fragment of the blue adequately cared for—in little old Back Log Camp of my Adirondacks, in Camp Megunticook of Maine, in the fruitful idea back of the Lake Placid Club. Now I had clearly run into a fourth, in this bungalow camp which was being looked after by the paternal Canadian Pacific.

I'll admit that when I woke I was surprised to find the product of Aladdin's lamp still over my head. It was a cozy bungalow, refreshingly new, with a porch. From the porch a view spread quietly in all directions. It was not one of those spectacular views that overwhelm you with a roar of beauty, like that breathless first look into the Grand Cañon. It was the sort that grows on the inner mind after the manner of daffodils and becomes part of the rhythm of your being. Lake Helen lay hushed a hundred feet below, mirroring the morning, which was rising from the peaked wood and casting its light ahead. I saw a great cliff of red stone to

the north, at whose foot perched a tiny white church with a red roof and a cluster of wigwams about it. On all other sides spread the wandering forest, miles and leagues of it, while over all ruled a serene blue sky.

A Swiss village of bungalows poked their roofs from the balsams about. It was as if Grindelwald had gone honeymooning and had been too pleased with the Nipigon to return home. Even the mother-in-law bungalow had come, a roomy central place where meals and books and gossip could be had. There I presented myself to a surprised hostess, an electric lady with black bobbed hair, a merry disposition, and a capacity for planning meals. I explained my presence.

"I hope you 'll like us," she said, as if this were the theme on which the camp and variations had been developed.

"I liked my bed, certainly, and I 'm entranced with the idea of breakfast."

"Then you can fish, or climb, or paddle or—or anything you like."

"I like that best," said I, laughing; and, after breakfasting before an open fire, walked back to my bungalow, ruminating on my pipe-stem. If I want to work, thought I, here 's the place. Here is freedom, and at the very foot of the rainbow. Here invisible hands lay the table, make

the bed, and secure one comfort in the desert. Then my eyes lifted and saw a birch-bark canoe cutting the unrippled lake. It was paddled fore and aft by squaws; the man of the family reclined amidships comfortably smoking. There was something in his posture that withered the very idea of work. I decided to be sensible and be an Indian, and, remembering my guide of the night before, descended to his log house by the shore, where a stout squaw was hanging out some clothes. She received me without comment, being able to talk no more languages than I could. I made signs that I would like to see her son. She made other signs, I know not to what purport. It was not a highly intelligible conversation; but, scenting business at last, she led me to his bedside, where Dan—the name I gleaned from her rousings—still slept. Hereupon my ambition to employ him faltered. I wanted an affable companion more than a guide, not an angrily awakened sluggard. But I could not stop Madame la Squaw now. The child of the forest stirred, stretched, smiled, and bade his mother be about his breakfast, while I stood embarrassed by, wondering what commands I had best issue.

“I ’ll go down by the lake while you dress,” I ventured.

"Oh, I 'm dressed," he said, and leaped like Venus, full-clothed, from the blankets. "What do you want to do?"

"I shall pay you to decide. It's to be the best thing one can do about here that takes all day."

"I know, then," he said, catching my mood. "I shall be ready."

"And I'll collect lunch while you get breakfast," and I trotted up the hill again, trying to decide whether this well-balanced youth was employing me or I him. So much will poise do. It will appropriate the uncertain every time. But this youth was distinctly likable, and I was willing to be employed.

There is a legend, originated by weaklings unequal to their jobs, that a proper subordination must be accomplished by sternness; and there still is a tradition that school-children and guides will mutiny if their commanders show the face of kindness. Discipline must of course be had, but I have never discovered that discipline is subverted by a true comradeship. Boys and their abler brothers, the Indians, return a felt relation; only it must be genuinely felt. That's the key.

Lake Helen is a widening of the Nipigon, a slowing of the stream. And right below the lake

there is a stretch of rapids, an excellent place for beginners to take a lesson.

"Here," I said to Dan, "is where I get some fun or a ducking. Are you scared?"

"No," he said, with what I call courage, and agreed to let me run it alone. Around the point we rode, faster and faster, the slippery hands of the water passing us on from wave to wave. There are few excitements in nature comparable to this flight. You are aware of the danger, but it seems worlds away. All about you are the river voices, cautioning, jeering, encouraging, but you cannot listen. All about are sights hardly taken in by the eye, so quickly are they passed, yet shot somehow into your consciousness. Now the whole river seems to be writhing, bucking, shaking, to dislodge you. You hold back here, shoot ahead there, parry an insolent wave-head, miss the opened jaws of a submerged rock by a nerve's breadth. And then you find yourself slowing up in dark water, with the bubbles winking fraternally at you, find yourself, if you're the amateur I am, a-quiver, tight-strung, glad and regretful at once.

Without mentioning that I had done it well, or anything, Dan resumed paddling; and, come to think back on it, the rapid was nothing at all. Just the same, the exhilaration was there, for ex-

hilaration lies in doing it for yourself, and I counsel those who find out this Nipigon Camp to get Dan Moriceau to tutor them down the intoxicating incline. But it is only fair to him to know how to swim first.

We paddled by the town consisting of a few painted cottages and a few more unpainted, with one barn-like structure advertised as "Cafee" which seemed in the process of being either put up or taken down, one could not be sure which. People could be only said to exist in such a place; the amenities of life, it seemed, had died of starvation there. So I judged at a glance. Yet later in the year I was to find person after person whose lives made mine seem stale and unprofitable, emanating from this village.

Even at first glance the bay struck one as profoundly beautiful. Great cliffs of granite hedged the mouth of the river, and around the first cape I saw that a sea of forested hills protected the huge lagoon from the outer lake. Steep ridges, a thousand feet in height, framed the calm water that returned the sky, and a silvery silence rested on the spruce. It was high noon indeed, not only of the day, but of the year, and like creatures of the sun we stretched out in the respective ends of our canoe and reveled in it.

Dan, with features clearer cut than the full-blood, had in him the best elements of the French

and Indian. Feeling now that I was as much partner as employer, he opened his mouth for the first time to more than monosyllables.

“Remember that scare-the-crow we passed?” he said. “There in a garden by the last house? Well, Joe Esquimault was coming by that one evening. He was drunk. He had been out fishing, but he had not caught much, and he was mad. He came by the scare-the-crow, drunk, and he saw its arms out wide, and he thought it was mocking him. He thought it was saying it had caught a bigger fish. So he called out, ‘You lie, you son of a gun; nobody ever caught a fish that big!’ But the scare-the-crow kept his arms out, showing him, and that made Joe madder still, so he turned his canoe around and went back and was going to fight him for a liar. Only the widow Gezick, who lives there, saw him and came out and threw a bucket of water over him, and that made him a bit sober.”

The story reminded me of *Don Quixote's* windmills, and I told Dan, who had a lively sense of humor; and he countered with a tale about Naniboujou which brought us to the red cliff of the Pictured Rocks. Here I found the old paintings: a portrait of the devil, with arms outstretched and an animated expression. There was a canoe rather overloaded, like one of Charon's, on a heavy trip. There were suc-

cessions of paddles and arrows and men and women in long array. If the scene were religious, it was about as revealing as our Book of Revelation. I asked Dan for a little higher criticism, but the knowledge of their meaning had died with his father—one result of racial splitting up.

“The old ones,” he said, “always drop a pinch of tobacco into the water as they go by, for the devil”; and then he suddenly looked around at me in the first real frankness, saying, “Do you believe in the devil?”

“Not in the devil you’re thinking about,” said I; “not in any person you can soothe for the day by a pinch of cut plug. Do you?”

“I don’t know,” he said, honestly.

“I do believe that you can’t sow grass seed and expect corn; and I believe that you can’t cheat and remain honest, or lie and be believed. There’s a little devil born with each lie, and there’s a bit of the Great Spirit in each bit of truth, don’t you think?”

He nodded vigorously. “Well, then,” I continued, feeling like Father Marquette when a novice, “the only devil I believe in is the false voice inside a man that keeps him from doing better. A man is like that tree; the Great Spirit is the sun; the devil is the temptation to stop growing and lie on the ground.”

“But all trees come to the ground,” said Dan,

inexorably. "Do you think we all go to the devil?"

The deuce take him, thought I, not being a theologian by art or nature; but I said: "The Great Spirit sows us like trees on the earth, each to grow and bear fruit according to its law. If we break the law we come to misfortune; if not, we come to a change we cannot understand. Winds wrestle with us, and floods try us; but these things which some call the devil I call events natural to our growth. So you see I don't really believe in any devil but a laziness, a weakness, within. Does that fit in with what you have observed?"

"Michel Skinoway saw the devil himself," said the incorrigible child. "Michel was going home, and he saw the devil behind him, and he was so scared that he ran and ran till the blood burst from his mouth and he died. I expect he went to hell."

The naïve, undoubting seriousness of this last remark showed me that Dan was really staring into one of those ready-made hells constructed and lit by the church.

"You believe that?" I asked. "I expect you're a fairly wicked fellow, but do you believe that if I upset this canoe and you were drowned you'd also go straight to hell?"

He nodded.

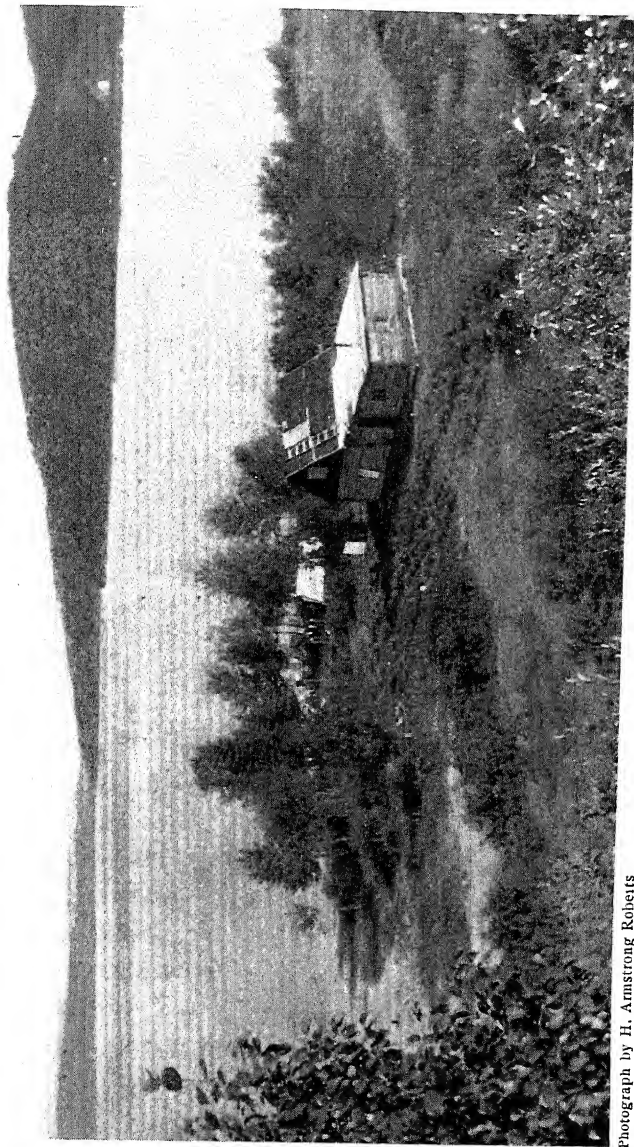
"Well, I don't believe you believe it," I said. "If you actually thought that you were going to be roasted a year for every leaf on that tree, and then a year for every drop of water in this lake, and so on, you 'd turn around now and head the other way. You 'd be so damn careful never to do the least thing wrong, that you 'd turn into an invalid. You 'd beat it from that bon-fire like children running from a bear, wouldn't you?"

A smile lit Dan's inscrutable eyes and curved his lips, a smile so naïve and charming that the Great Spirit would be hard-hearted indeed even to singe anybody who could smile like that.

"No, sir, Dan," I continued, "I believe in Cause and Effect and a Great Spirit with a mind wider than the skies who regulates these with a larger wisdom than we can know. If a man lays by no wood, he has no fire; if he lays up no good, he can expect no good."

"You 've got a fish," said Dan, with praiseworthy practicality, and the flow of theology stopped in favor of hauling in our dinner.

At the risk of appearing eccentric in my guide's eyes, I took a dip in the lake while Dan was cleaning the fish, slicing the bacon, buttering the bread, and setting the tea to brew. And as I lay on my back and looked up through the birch above me,



Photograph by H. Armstrong Roberts

DAN'S HOUSE AND LAKE HELEN

I felt like an exile returned to waters equally as sweet as those of Babylon.

Dan was a perfect illustration of the best sort of half-breed. Indian reserve was a balance to French loquacity; Indian indifference to the main chance was an engaging offset to the white's indifference to anything else. We sunned, smoked, talked, laughed; he told me a dozen things about the woods, I asked him a hundred questions. What did he want to "do"? Nothing. He would do as he was already doing; that was good enough. His father had just died, and so he would support his mother. When he'd had enough of ranging around with the girls, he'd pick out one and marry. La Hontan writes of the married Indian, "I give you to know that during the whole course of their married State they maintain an inviolable fidelity to one another." And La Hontan was the sort of man to know. But the idea of fidelity was as unreasonable to Dan as to the heroes and heroines that figure in our novels on Long Island. Fidelity is not now one of the aristocratic virtues; and yet a gentleman is known by the sacredness of his pledged word. There is some contradiction here, and I'll wager that when this era of chatter dies away, this age of snappy cynicism in which it matters not whether one's views be

right or wrong so long as they be witty, when this smoke blows by, we 'll find the mimes fled and men back again, Indian in their virtue and their strength.

Nothing of account happens on a day outdoors; for the spaciousness of day, the vitality of the sun, the large serenities of wind and water and green forest, will cramp themselves into no narrow page. The magic that can be put into a word is beneath nature. Yet you can see the sky in a dewdrop, and scent a whole summer in a whiff of fir. So for me to hear the word "Nipigon," the crowded and magic name of "Lake Superior," is to fill my mind with a maze of living pictures. There seemed no limits then. Beyond each hill were experiences worth hard winning, up each river fresh new joys. The fires lit then will never go out, and as I range from one to another in my memory I see the comrades particular to each, and the world seems full of a number of friends.

We paddled far out on the tranquil bay, and I cast eyes of longing on a hundred shores. I fail to see why an island should be so monstrously intriguing, but each of those seemed the bright particular place to have a camp, and had we brought food we should not have turned back. But Naniboujou was convoying me unseen, and when he caused the sun to fall and us to turn,

it was to other advantages. For I stopped in at a general store and found an especial person.

He was very busy. He wore no coat, no collar. His shirt opened to view a firm neck, which upheld a generous head to balance the big square shoulders. On the head stood blond hair as if tossed there; blue-gray eyes softened the other giant aspects of him. He was telling one salesman where to find the baking-powder, directing another who appeared to be taking an inventory, and, through the door, managing the recanvassing of a canoe. Perhaps, by thought-waves, he was superintending other transactions on higher floors; I could not tell. I only know it seemed a pity to submit him to questions, yet whenever I approached any one else they continually waved me toward him. So I came to the presence. As far away as the Sault I had heard of Jack McKirdy. At Fort William he was represented to me as Nipigon. More wondrous still, he was not without the same honor in his own village and in his own home.

“Do you suppose?” I said with a tempered despair, “that you can possibly be disengaged before nightfall?”

“I ’ve nothing much on hand now,” he replied, interrupting the four operations. “What can I do for you?”

"Tell me about the country," said I, more wisely than I knew.

"Why—why—why"—he said, for Jack stammers a little at the apex of his excitements—"why, I'd stop anything to do that"; and, giving a general gesture for the activities to resume, he led me out under an apple-tree and introduced me to his mother, a gentle-looking lady of considerable vim. Then we began on the map. In an hour I knew that region better than if I'd seen it by airplane, and also I knew Jack. Both were very satisfying. He had been to college, and it hadn't spoiled him for his country; he had associated with many notable personalities, and had gained in breadth by that. His mother showed me a gift from the Prince of Wales to her son.

"How did you find the prince?" I asked.

"Fine," he said, with sincerity, and he proceeded to tell me two or three little incidents that had not got into the papers, which revealed that engaging young man as a most humorous prince. It interested me to see him measured through McKirdy's eyes, eyes that seemed totally unblinded by false surfaces. There was a beautiful health in them. Here was stout Saxon-dom touched with spirit. Here was a man who could hustle the languorous redskin, and yet hug the delicacy of the forest to his heart. I listened

to him and kept saying inside, "I'll heed that suggestion, for I like this man"; and because I wanted him to like me, I finally left. I fished for Dan's opinion of him after we had pushed up the rapid of the morning—keep close to the left bank as you go up, cross above the bridge, and creep determinedly, nose to bank, as you value a dry skin—and Dan said, "He's all right; he keeps his word," which was interesting praise to me.

I hated to pay Dan off. It was like inclosing return postage to a friend. But when he was decent enough to demur, even though gently as a dove, that made it all right, and I climbed to my bungalow with the sense of another perfect day completed. Little did I know how generous the gods can be. At dinner I met an enlivening lot back from their day's pursuits. Brian McCool told of his fire-ranging among the moose on Lookout Mountain; the Pattersons, of the fish to be had at Camp Alexander; the Misses Oettinger, of stalking Indians behind a lens; and I reaped a creelful of advice from an old-timer on the river, Mr. Sea of Kansas City. And again I thought the day was done, when two gentlemen who had just finished paying treaty-money to the Indians came in, and my very attentiveness to their syllables hatched an invitation from the elder and precipitated a struggle in my heart.

They were offering me an opportunity to see the Indians paid at Long Lac, an opportunity that could come but once. Yet smaller opportunities crowded nearer and so loomed as large. I strolled out to think it over. A sunset painted the land.

A faint trail led along a ridge, and before I knew it I had emerged on an Indian clearing and had come nose to snout with an enormous husky tethered by a much too slender chain. I backed respectfully. He raised his voice. Some Indian urchins rose from a thicket where they 'd been concealed and ran as if I were a windigo. Other dogs awoke, leaped the length of their gossamer tethers, their jaws twitching to have at me. I stood there simmering in horror. If I moved I feared that they would construe it as an invitation to the chase. If I did not move, I knew that no fastenings could long outlast their fury. I tried looking the nearest in the eye, but he jerked it about so that I couldn't fix it. Their gestures were bad enough, but their noise was worse. Such growls, beginning at the hips and working forward! Such barkings, such blasts of bow-wowling, I have never heard. My disbelief in devils disappeared; here were twenty. But the chains did not snap, and gliding softly, evenly, without betraying the emotions of flight, I betook myself from their midst, and came out on

a bluff overlooking the lake, came out on the stationary sunset and a scene that made a frontispiece to lands farther north.

Beneath me lay the lake, still as stillness itself. On its shores some Indians were grouped about a fire that blinked and smoked in front of a birch-bark tepee. In the far west rose a wall of purple cloud, a wall with here and there a crack in it through which a Pyramus sun peeked at gentle Thisbe twilight.

I stood with a charmed interest, looking from that legendary gathering below to the enchanted scene abroad; and my heart brimmed with feeling. For once I would not hurry anywhere; I would see this drama out. So I stood beside a birch, for it was appropriate to stand before the gods, and began my vigil. The hands of earth reached up and raised me above time and change.

It is still in fashion to say that man is but a transient in a vale of tears. But you cannot expect the fashionable to know the eternity latent in an hour. Fashion is a substitute for experience. Had such been with me on that ledge, they would have felt the opening of doors, and have known the boundlessness of being.

Invisibly night drew on. The Indians silently disappeared. In the north a fixed twilight seemed the very inscription of a poem, and the

flat skies toward Great Slave Lake told of a vastness and a loneliness incomprehensible. A night wind, sighing and strange, flitted through the forest behind me. Then peace settled again, and I stood watch with the fraternal stars.

CHAPTER VII

PAYING TREATY

BEFORE dawn there was a sky-quake; and the purple cloud-wall, which Pyramus Sun had built up the night before, fell with a splash on my bungalow's roof, while the lions who had been sneaking up to eat him and gentle Thisbe scuttled away, roaring. I woke to hear the last of them down the valley. The patter of drops enhanced the coziness of the place, but I was not adventuring for coziness; so I determined to take Mr. Paget's offer of traveling with the Department of Indian Affairs, and continue the intriguing operation of minding other people's business. This, with the added chance to gossip about them later, constitutes the fascination of the road.

We made a diverse party. Mr. Frederick Paget, a friendly man in the fifties, with shrewd eyes tempered by kindness, had gone these rounds for years and enjoyed the official progress from band to band. Mr. J. G. Burk, having survived a career overseas, was being initiated into the tactful one of Indian agent. Mr. Jack Cum-

mins was the jovial representative of the Department of Game and Fisheries; while tall, spare Constable Harold Cole, in the crimson coat, blue trousers with the gold stripe, and jaunty Stetson of the Royal Canadian Mounted, made us civilians look drab and sparrowy. For guide, interpreter, and friend an ex-chief of the Ojibways came along.

It was nearing twilight when we arrived at Long Lac. The Indians gathered about the station seemed not a bit impressed to see the Government descend from the train in so many shapes and forms. I wondered what to do, since there was nothing to see but a Hudson's Bay Company store and a restaurant where you could get meals if you didn't care what you ate. Everybody else was occupied with official duties; I had only pipe and sunset to divert me, when I saw a chap staggering along with some ice-cream freezers on a wheelbarrow, which was further laden with two small trunks and some lesser parcels. I had noticed him on the train, informally clothed in army trousers and a shirt open at the neck, which I have come to recognize as the hustler's traveling-costume. He represented the new spirit of civilization, the modern voyageur; and I predict that he will be the John Jacob Astor of his beat if hustling can do it.

Some oranges spilled from a crate which

balanced on one side of the wheelbarrow. I helped him collect them. "Thanks," he said briskly; "have one." And he aimed one at me. "My name is Everett. Yours? . . ."

I told him, adding, "I should think you 'd need an assistant."

"Oh, I 'm used to this," he said with an engaging smile. "Feel that." I felt it, a doubled arm muscled as hard as a railroad-tie. "I like to work."

"Yes, that 's proved," I replied, "but I don't see what you have to work on."

"Indians here, a railroad construction-camp there, operators along the line. In winter I put my trunks on a sledge, and the boys are glad to see me, you bet. Want to go over with me? I 'm taking these to the encampment. I 'll sell them to-morrow, when the Indians have some money."

So I helped him freight the canoe, rehearsing in my mind the historic scene: rapacious dealer in trinkets, ingenuous Indian, powwow, departure of the Indian with tinsel and gewgaws, withdrawal of rapacious trader with the Indian's roll. I looked at Everett. He seemed too decent to cheat anybody, in fact he was saying: "Give them a square deal, and they 're glad to see you back. I cleaned up three hundred dollars here last year; hope to do a little better this."

"Then you don't sell them gold-bricks and electric washing-machines?" I asked.

"You watch me," he said quickly. I determined to.

The encampment seethed with dogs, children, and activity. A new detachment was just arriving from the north, and I had the novelty of watching the squaws work while the gentlemen of the tribe sat around and conversed with them affably. Indian girls, with vestiges of good looks still apparent, dragged in poles which some old crones had cut in the thicket. Two squaws, both of them the wives of one redskin of the old order, pounded in about twenty aspen stakes in a circle some ten feet across. About the top they bound a cedar-withe and to this tied a birch-bark roll, the bark having been previously sewed together. Long aspen poles leaned to a common point, and around these more bandages of birch-bark were bound. An armful of boughs was thrown in, and the house was ready. The skinny dogs took possession of it with a sniveling alacrity, only to be booted out with yelps. During the operation the men enjoyed one pipe after another, and with the greatest command over themselves abstained from any aid that I could see. Everywhere was cheerfulness, except among the canines, who wore the original hangdog expression. Everybody was smiling, talking, joking. It was reunion after a



Courtesy of Canadian Geological Survey

TREATY DAY

long hard winter of much abstinence. I was lost, too, in enjoyment of their enjoyment.

But Everett was letting no dividend escape. The youth, for he was the age of a college senior, was infected with enterprise. He had opened his trunks and was crying his wares like a magniloquent hawker at a fair, supplying a stream of jests the while, for which he was applauded by the children and behowled by the dogs. The adult purchasers were not yet stirred from their chores and conversation. But they would be. Parting with one's money had never been made easier than by my friend; but he was keen enough not to take the edge from the morrow, when they would have cash, scarcely allowing more than a look at the multicolored raiment in his trunks before he closed them. The item which impressed me the most was that he should leave trunks, oranges, ice-cream freezers, there and return with me.

"Won't they steal half your stuff?" I asked.

"No, these Indians are still uncivilized," he said.

It was nearing ten when I rejoined Mr. Paget, yet twilight still caressed the lake and the dim forest, while overhead a sibylline candor seemed to be uttering things unspeakable. The most beautiful anthology of poems in the world, I think, would be a book of northern twilights.

Our tents were up, a fire was dancing, and the Department of Indian Affairs was smoking all alone, the Mounted Police having gone off on some clandestine errand with the Game and Fisheries. I expressed my surprise and gladness at having found these Indians so similar to those of the rare days of the Jesuits.

"There are probably more Ojibways now than in those times," said Mr. Paget; "upward of fifteen thousand."

"I'm surprised at their cordiality," I said. "I expected to find them sullen, dull, without initiative."

"Not quite that bad," he smiled. "But they're pagan under the skin, and still children. The Indian mind does not concern itself with the realms of abstract thought. He knows nature, but not as a set of laws. Romantic writing is still stuffed with blunders about him. But I've never forgotten one beautiful sentence on a page of Parkman where he is saying that the Indian's romance, poetry, rhetoric, and religion point to the idea of one all-ruling deity. 'We are called upon to admire,' he says, 'a conception by the untutored intellect which could conceive a thought too vast for Socrates and Plato.' The spirit-land is never far off for them, and though their old rites were a chaos of ridiculous and incoherent super-

stition, they have always felt the infinite and living mystery about us."

"The degree in which a man feels that marks his spiritual maturity for me," I said, "and I would rather associate with a common person infused with this Wordsworthian light from beyond our visible borders, than with the intellectual dandies who are bounded by their brains. The man of the woods is then the truer poet than the man of the world, and to the poet is conceded the deeper insight and the vision."

"That is good theory," laughed Mr. Paget, "but you have omitted the element of soap."

"I 'm content to have you grant the theory," I replied. "I would not be a savage, but I would like to keep the savage's two richest possessions, liberty and this sense of superhuman presence. I think that even Shakspeare lost it, though he gained the world instead."

I know not to what conclusion we should have come, had Mr. Burk not strolled back accompanied by the factor of the post, also in earnest conversation.

"A murder?" repeated Burk.

"Surely a murder. The boy had surprised them after they had killed the white trapper, and to prevent his giving them away they choked him with a bandanna."

They joined us, and I sat up to listen, knowing that it was only the beginning; for all stories of the Northland worth the telling, apparently commence with a murder and then work up to the climax from that. This was an exciting anecdote laid at the foot of the very lake by which we sat. I was to find in my summer that all the places where people have clustered on the frontier have been enriched with human blood, and later I heard tales of railroad construction days which for assault and heroism seemed to vie with the best half-hours of New York City. To counteract this grisly tale Mr. Paget told a couple of true stories about the Mounted Police. It was after eleven when we turned in, yet a rim of clover green was lingering along the north horizon. . . .

A tent with the Canadian flag drowning in the sunlight had been erected for the rites, and nearly four hundred Indians were on the grounds. There was no crowding, no pushing curiosity as our canoes were beached. Mr. Paget took a chair at the administrative end of the table, with young Burk beside, while Constable Cole and Game-and-Fisheries Cummins were to deliver coupons for beaver at the foot. The easy solemnity emanating from these authorities pleased the ritual-loving Indians. It was as if a meeting of Parliament, tinged with the familiarity of an old home week, were taking place. I squatted on a box

near enough to bask in the official glory and to hear what was going on. The interpreter spoke.

The basis of the meeting was equality. Mr. Paget wore the mien of dignity and kindness, and if ever the right person had found the right place it was here. One by one the dark descendants of a splendid race stood before him, while he asked after their health, the numbers in their family, the health of their children, in a voice low and plentiful in patience. The Indian's word was always taken. This, I found, was because the Indian does not lie by preference. He forgets as a child forgets; he is often at the mercy of his needs and of his emotions; but, given a fair chance, he will tell the truth. I had always supposed that the wigwam was the home of mendacity.

It grew warm under the canvas, and I strolled about the encampment, a conglomeration of wigwams and tents, each group having a fire over which a kettle was invariably brewing. Rabbit-skin robes, deerskins, Hudson's Bay Company blankets, were airing. Rifles stood around. I was thrilled when some dusky brave said, "How," to me as in the best fiction. In a clearing some young fellows were kicking a football clumsily, and I joined in. They forgot their shyness, and it was I who was perpetually aware of being in another world. We developed something of a

game, with spectators, and soon were dripping, for the sun beat fiercely from a cloudless sky.

Not one of those fellows could speak a word of English or French, and I knew no Ojibway, yet our side soon managed as much teamwork as if we 'd practised for months. They were infinitely quick to acquire, and responsive to encouragement. Their eyes would meet mine in a frank stare. In theirs I saw the reserve of a wild animal, and I imagined that to become a friend of one would be a long matter. Yet there was no surliness. I smiled, they smiled, and the invisible bond which nets the world in a universal mesh was strengthened by another knot.

And after the game, a swim. We went around a point of rocks and stripped, they taking covert looks at my white body, and I admiring the sun-glinting bronze of theirs. The abhorrence of the adult Indian for the water was evident in none of them, and we had a sort of water-poló with a line of sorry dogs looking on from shore. But when it was over and we had dressed, the bond dissolved, they faded away, and I was once more the excluded of the race.

Beneath the tents was a litter of everything; conspicuously a potpourri of dogs and children. What amazed me was how such clean-looking individuals could emerge from such filthy quarters. Also I noticed the persistence of a Madonna-like

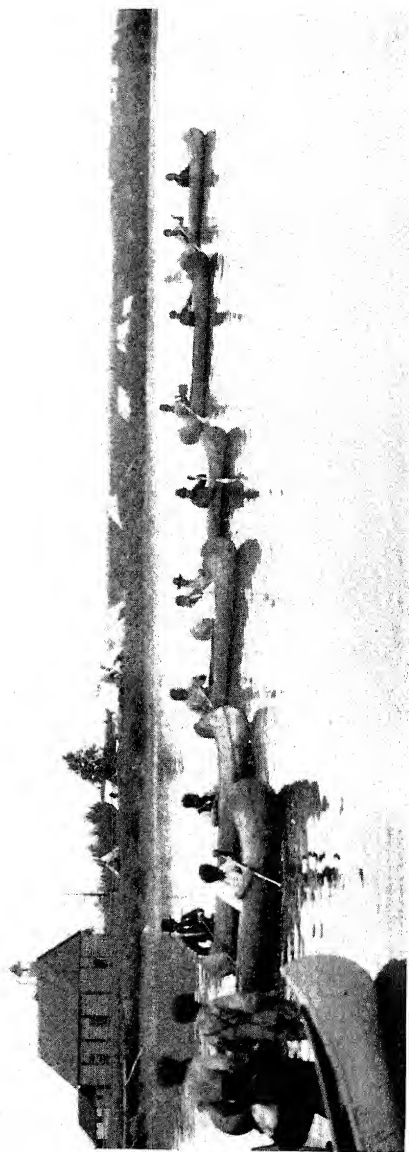
beauty in some of the young squaws, in face if not in figure, though the expression in their eyes was not of a lively interest. In one tent I saw a young woman lying breasts down upon the earth, dipping her fingers in a bowl of gravy, with three dogs of uncertain ancestry grouped about her, watching. As she licked her fingers and then their lips, I noticed but little difference in expression. The encampment as a living place depressed me.

But in front of the treaty tent the scene was enlivening. Everett was retailing ambrosia from the ice-cream freezer with an indefatigable cheer. In the shade of a birch sat a circle of squaws, each with a papoose, beady-eyed and solemn-cheeked, in moss-bay cradles, which consisted of a board, straps, caribou moss, and light frame over its head to prevent concussion of the brain if dropped thereon. While with the Ojibways children do not seem to be the annual if celestial necessity, as among our grosser immigrants, there are enough of them to keep the well-spring of the race brimming. The next size larger played like bear-cubs. I saw one receive a vigorous wallop in the game, and I expected noise. But instead of raising a Christian hullabaloo, the little kid wrinkled up his nose, gasped, swallowed the pain with heathen stoicism, and forgot it. Little girls were dressed in long skirts like grown women.

One was in charge of her baby brother, and when she got tired of bearing him about she set him on a cake of Everett's ice, which seemed to satisfy.

And now from the trunks were coming those things that have always ravished the red race: pipes for the old women, combs, ribbons, silk waists; jack-knives for the boys, and toy guns; hat-bands for the young bucks reading, "Hunting for a Kiss"; for the girls, "Single but Willing"; for the men, tump-lines and lustrous shirts. And all the while this Wanamaker of the wilderness cried his wares: "Come here for your genuine patent-leather slippers. Here's just the thing for sprains, bruises, inflammation of the liver. Get the universal remedy. It eases while it cures. That's right, sonny, make your change out of the hat yonder; certainly, sister, take the blue instead, and bring the yellow back. Everybody this way. Look at this pack of dyes. Turn your dirty dresses red and be happy"; and so on and on and on, his luminous imagination dazzling them like a moving Broadway.

There was a circulation of Indians, from the tent, where each Indian was being paid his four dollars, to Everett, who pocketed it before it had time to burn a hole in the flimsiest pocket. Yet there was nothing sordid about him; he gave value. If he made the lure of spending impossible to resist, he at least did not cheat his prey.



Courtesy of Canadian Geological Survey

TREATY DAY, LONG LAC

He quite captured my imagination, this young fellow with the clear, humorous eyes, breezy manner, and mastery of a situation captured by the only secure method: self-reliance, perseverance, honesty. I watched the hat laden with change; there was no petty thievery. These Indians did as they were done by. The dusky lad who was given charge of the ice-cream dispensary extended no free favors behind his employer's back. He would never qualify for politics. I watched the aged with interest. There was an old medicine-woman dressed like the witch in "Hansel and Gretel," except that she wore doeskin moccasins instead of wooden clogs. I heard no harsh words, saw no unpleasant acts. The spirit of the occasion was, as ever with the Indian, deeply social, and I could understand why one squaw paid her thirteen-dollar fare from Fort William to collect her four-dollar dole. It was not deficient arithmetic; it was the desire to unite casting calculation to the winds.

Noon came, and with it an invitation to eat in the neighboring construction-camp. Men have to be lured to this lonely life by a forcible appeal to the palate. It was a heroic meal, wherein the dessert unit was an individual pie. In the afternoon the imperturbable Paget resumed his feudal hearings, and I my browsings among the breed with whom those incredible Jesuits once

strove. Their fate is inevitable, for the higher must succeed the gross, but there is sadness in it, a sadness I felt most in the games of the afternoon. For when the business was put by and there were competitions—squaw canoe races, old men carrying monstrous loads with the tump-line, boys in races and in tugs of war—my mind could not help creating the original scene of which this was but an impoverished ghost. Here was the thin remnant of a people carrying through an old festival with abated enterprise, and one knew they knew it.

But it were ridiculous to weep idle tears on the grave of a departed savagery. For life is always in the ascendant, so you take the wide view. Age can be wise youth, and autumn a turning of the spiral. If the savages who once used to scalp now smile to serve, there seems small loss. A distant picturesqueness has been exchanged for a closer understanding; and I wager that those laughing men who guided and comraded me through an enchanted summer were happier than their ancestors, those bands of rancorous savages who once ran yelping from place to place, roasting whom they met.

CHAPTER VIII

AN IDYL OF THE KING

I HAD left the others to the prosecution of their governmental duties in order to keep an eye on the universe. Not that this called for any attention. Twilight was moving smoothly; the floor of heaven had been swept until not even in the corners lurked a cloud, though a moon-paring, the color of comb honey, had been overlooked on the western threshold. The breeze had been put to bed, the night-watchman had lit a star or two, and there was a deep quiet everywhere as if the elder sons of creation had gone off to a party. I poked the fire together gently in order not to arouse any mosquitos, and sat down so that I could look out over the drowsing lake. A step on the sand, and Cole of the Royal Mounted had joined me. I was glad, for I had determined not to follow him around in the way a *débutante's* eyes follow a dancing duke. There is something in a uniform as in a title, and any one who shrinks from pressing his company on lords and ladies will not likely run after those whom red coats

and handsome profiles have set apart from the ordinary.

"How did you like the show?" he asked.

"I've been comparing it in my mind with a similar crowd of country folk down home. I still think that the Indians have the advantage."

"How so?"

"To-day I have seen less vulgarity, more real enjoyment, more health, more natural dignity, more good looks, than I should have seen among the same number of people at a county fair."

"You are right," said Cole quietly, "but because you have been comparing these children with adults. Children are not vulgar, do enjoy life, are healthier, have a natural dignity, and are better looking than the same individuals when grown. You would not prefer this set to a reunion of your college, would you?"

"It is harder to generalize there. These are living in the direction of their nature; few college men allow themselves to, long after graduation. To transgress one's nature is to descend to Avernus, perpendicularly. They may flame going, but they are soon cinders, and what is more uninteresting than a cinder? I would keep in touch with the best of each."

"Thus ending the argument," said Cole smiling.

"Only to begin another. At first blush it

would look hopeful to me, if I 'd murdered a man, to sneak away through these miles of bush and stay hid until the disturbance blows over."

"It does n't blow over," he said in a low voice.

"Then until it is somewhat safer to go."

"To go where?" and he put a larger log on the fire. "There is nowhere to go. Everybody in this country is more or less known; and if you 're a stranger you are more or less watched. Suppose you do kill an inconspicuous prospector. He does not appear. He is looked up. The net is woven; the suspicion leads eventually to you."

"But how?"

"The country is full of roving Indians. They tell what they hear and see to each other as they pass. They are suspicious of a white man alone in the woods. You cannot hunt or fish or eat in a place without its being known. There was a case—" and he proceeded to tell me a detective story of the Yukon country, a story which you can read in a fascinating book called "Policing the Plains" by the Rev. M. A. MacBeth, who was chaplain to the Force for many years. It was from this book, and not from Constable Cole or Inspector Dann or any other of the Royal Mounted, that I learned the whole amazing truth about these modern knights who ride abroad redressing human wrongs, who ride with a skill and redress with an efficiency which would have

startled Arthur into new enthusiasms. For the men who are actually engaged in the patrols and unviewed heroisms have perfected themselves in reticence. They make a career of keeping quiet. You get nothing from them except a new sense of hidden power and the art of being a hero without mentioning it. If you would recreate your enthusiasm for the splendid tradition of Anglo-Saxon manhood, buy that book. A healthy hero-worship does more for a boy than all the influences of the decalogue, Sunday-school, school, parents, aunts, bedtime stories, and verbotens that dog his steps. To submit a young fellow to a nicely muscular statue of the Greeks at thirteen, to Tennyson's "Lancelot and Elaine" at fifteen, to an anecdote of Lincoln at seventeen, is to turn his animal, amorous, and admiring faculties into lanes that lead ever sensitively upward. It is his instinct to be strong, to be chivalrous, to follow the great leader. And I do not believe that the heroes of youth are utterly excluded from the heart of the grown man. Roosevelt, that impetuous Lancelot, had only to hint the need, and a hundred thousand would have ridden from Camelot with him in any direction. And it stirs the pulse to know that to-day, when the dollar bill is the banner which the hosts of earth are ready to defend with any amount of talk, there is a group of men, steadfast, unflinch-

ing, incorruptible, whose veins run blood and not bullion, and whose lives are pledged to the maintenance of the right.

There is only one war that is not ridiculous first and brave second, and that is the war against injustice. That is the war these fellows carry on. Inexpensively equipped, they ride the sky-lines of the north, often alone for months, seeing, with tact and courage and endless patience, that the peace is kept. They face lawless gangs singly. They never shoot first. They make a game of hiding their valor in laconic reports. They are matured Sir Bediveres and Sir Geraints, whose determination to enforce the law is fair and inflexible. On a mere pittance they manage to keep smart. They are unbribable. They achieve, for the empire that is the embodiment of justice and the unbroken covenant, a continuance of that fair name. If humanity is to go down before its greeds, these will go down fighting.

It is no small wonder, then, that as I sat there beside one of these men, casting my fly of interrogation on his pools of reticence, I enjoyed striking the small fry of information which he allowed to rise. I enjoyed being laconic, imperturbable, too. I made no references to Pendragon or Guinevere. I did not let him know that he belonged to a knighthood quite as roman-

tic as that other, when for a space all Arthur's men were of one will, and through that strength performed their glorious wonders. He would probably have laughed at me. I doubt if he had ever heard of Tristan and Dagonet and gray-bearded Merlin. Later I hunted up a couple of good stories of the things Cole had done, stories of intelligent bravery, but I shall not tell them here; the man might die of shame. And probably this reticence of theirs is the seal of perfection on the situation. Deeds now; the tale of daring later. The Round Table waited quite a while for Malory and longer still for Tennyson. It is sufficiently reassuring to know that men still go adventuring for a cause, and that those ancient comrades would recognize for peers these men who ride the wilderness for justice' sake.

Night had come, and the lake was a faint defile of light between two cliffs of darkness, when a man emerged, saying, "A wire for you, sir." It was uncanny, as if this omniscient wilderness, where everybody knew everybody else and his business, had already ensnared me. For, so far as I knew, not a soul except a few back at Nipigon knew where I was. The telegram read:

Have arranged long trip around Lake Nipigon for you. If desired take westbound for Orient Bay tonight.

JACK MCKIRDY.

“That ’s service,” I laughed, remembering a wish I ’d expressed before the man in an aside. “The people of Ontario are certainly bent on giving a fellow a good time.”

“There ’s nothing too good for a man out here if he acts white,” said Cole. “But it ’s a pretty damn independent country if he does n’t. Let ’s go look on at the dance.”

CHAPTER IX

NEIL OF THE NIPIGON

I DESCENDED from the west-bound at three thirty. I had not slept, for the men who had got on the train were ready to talk, and I pressed the cup of their conversation eagerly to my lips. It was talk of early times when men were men and not a lot of ivy plants, and existence was more than a file of sorrows. I quote not my opinion but the general sentiment of that smoker. I would have pawned my skin for the text verbatim of that colloquy, but a sort of sleep pervaded me, and all I remember now is that nobody bothered to commit suicide in those stirring days; it was sufficiently fatal just to be around. How the narrators managed to survive I have also forgotten. I do remember being sorry to leave off listening to their shameless lies.

On the station platform stood two men, Jack McKirdy, still open-shirted, still joyous with that felicity of boyishness on which the years had made no inroads; beside him a tall man with noticeable shoulders and a bull neck. He was obviously of that clan whose ancestors had trod

the Highland heather. It was Neil McDougall. Jack said a word or two and took the train. Mr. McDougall said nothing and took me, tossing my duffle-bag on his shoulder before I could stop it. I was n't going to have a man with graying hair carrying my outfit, but it would have required a strong and hasty worker to get it from him. So I conceded the point. Conceding points, I found, was the result of association with this blue-eyed bull moose of a man, who concealed his horny qualities beneath an illusory velvet. We passed under an arch reading "Nipigon Lodge," passed another one of McKirdy's stores, and came to a parcel of cabins.

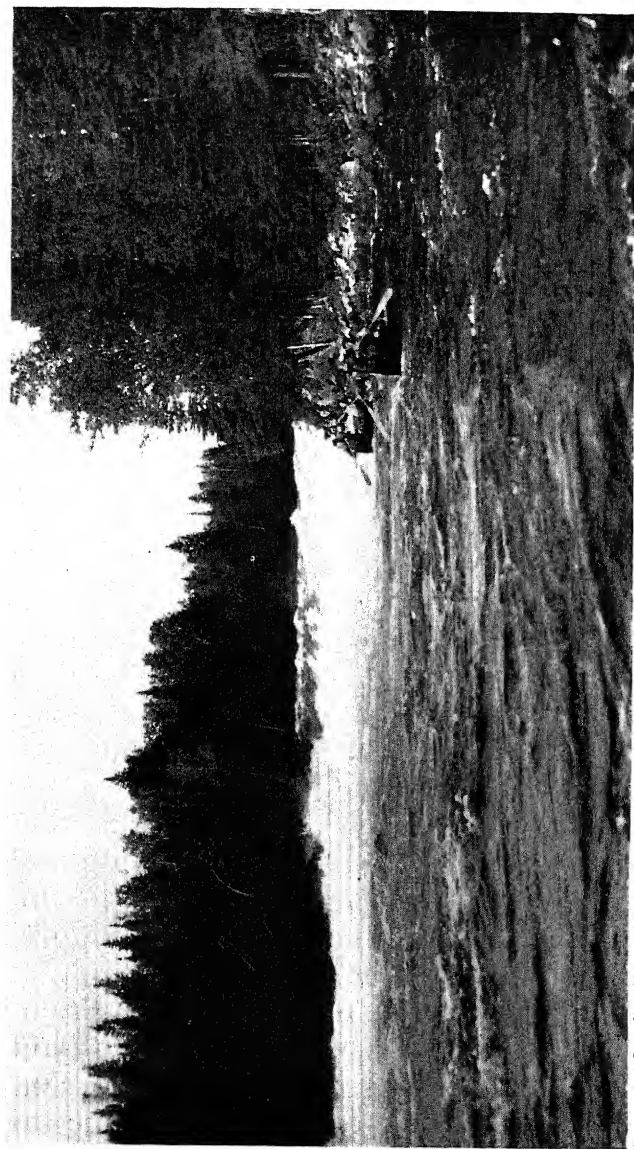
"I put on the kettle in case you 'd care for a cup of tea," he said, "but perhaps you 'd rather turn in."

"I can sleep next month," I said; "let 's have the tea."

I followed him through a living-room into the kitchen, where he turned up the lamp and gave me a chance to see the owner of the voice. I might have been sitting before a Kentucky colonel who had quit juleps a while in order to get fit. There was the little mustache, the wisp of gray goatee, the comeliness of sixty years worn with a sense of humor. But he had an athletic aura foreign to the Kentucky clubster. It was something I noticed the moment he began to move

about the room, with an easy motion born of a life in the bush. He had a suppleness which the Indian has, the moose have, and the caribou, while city athletes and cows do not. When I found that he was nearer seventy than sixty I was amazed, for an old man halts in his gait, while Mr. McDougall had a melodic smoothness that was beautiful to watch. He had done enough walking in the woods to acquire a serpent's glide, to be sure, having built the first telegraph line through that neck of the woods, and, when the railroad was being built, having kept the engineers supplied with necessities. "The first four times I went from Fort William to Fort Garry," he said, "I did the trip each way on foot." The distance is unconscionable, but as he said it there was nothing in his voice to convey the fact that any one of these trips was aught but a jaunt. In reality the average outer would have boasted of one such trip the rest of his days. That is the discouraging thing about the North. You perform a marvel of self-considered hardship and next day find that your neighbor exceeds it as a matter of course. However, the tenderfoot is measured by just standards, and if he prove game but not cocky, finds commendation in their eyes.

It was good tea. In the North tea-making is the universal art. I was amazed at the delicacy of taste shown by my dusky guides, having been



VIRGIN FALLS, NIPIGON

Courtesy of Canadian National Railways

once accustomed to perpetual expostulation with the cooks of French Canada, who boiled tea until a splash of it would turn your skin into a well-tanned moccasin. But in Ontario the roughest brewed it dark but not bitter. There is some charm about tea and talk at four of the morning that four of the afternoon cannot provide. I was shrewd enough to know that this modest giant opposite was one in a great many; I did not know that he was a veritable czar of that whole wilderness, president of a big guides' association, ex-Hudson's-Bay factor, Indian agent, and man of many undertakings. The first fact that struck me was his penetration to the springs of human nature and his ability to delineate. He told one tale after another, beginning with some plausible fact and modulating skilfully, like a musician, into fable, always ingenious, always funny, always piercingly human. I don't know yet whether he really did train a moose to race ponies. I do know that when he was chased up a tree by a black bear, a slender aspen which the bear could not climb, and the bear brought a beaver in its arms to fell the tree, I breathed a sigh of relief: I didn't have to try to believe that. But he soon had withdrawn into the twilight zone of truth again, and as I listened I had to maintain a running process of verification in the back of my mind, for the mask he wore gave

no clue. It was legitimate entertainment, and between tales he was constantly interjecting sage reflections on the kind of people who came to the Lodge. The Canadian National did good business when they induced this suave wild man, this forest gentleman, who had the exuberance of a stripling, the executive faculties of a general, to prepare welcomes for those lucky ones who lighted upon this jumping-off place. Beneath all lay a true passion for the bush. When I admitted to what extent it claimed me he replied instantly: "Isn't it true? You go in. You get cold and hungry and weary, yes, good and weary and mighty hungry, and you come out swearing by the holes in your boots that you'll never go in again. 'Never agin',' that's the word. And in two weeks you forget it all, the chance comes, and back you go. Isn't it true?"

"Is it our weakness, or is it a real drunkenness, some hidden, powerful spell of the North, that does draw the soul?"

"It's a racial call, a homesickness for our racial youth. As a race we have come of age; we must wear white collars, but under them beats the old blood."

"The old blood," I pondered, "the flood of health, the cure of distempers bred of the town, the corrective of all timorous tendencies, the wash

of fundamentals! A drop of that is the true iron, is n't it?"

"I believe not only in the sun cure for people but the moon cure, the cure by rain and freezing, by fatigue in forests and rest by camp-fires. That 's the reason I stick here helping McKirdy shovel them into the bush, pale, listless, weak; to rake them back, tanned, energetic, and moaning for more." And his mild blue eyes glinted sparks as he said it.

"It 's the only way to keep our original sanity," I said.

"And speaking of original sanity, how about bed?" said Neil.

We needed no lantern to guide us to his cabin, for dawn, as delicate as the song of a dreaming white throat from a bush near-by, was paling the soft infinite overhead; and stepping down to the water's edge I saw that we were at the end of a funnel-like bay which opened upon an opalescent lake, Lake Nipigon ten miles away. Mountains rose on every hand, low and forest bearing. Here was perfect quiet, perfect peace.

It is surprising what two hours in a bunk can do for a man, if he utilize every minute of them. Sleep, then cold water on the outside and hot coffee on the in, and the day seemed as good as new. I dropped into McKirdy's store to get some

flies, and heard there some good tales of my host.

"A man fools himself bad," said the young fellow behind the counter, "if he takes Mr. McDougall for an old man. He's only seventy-two!"

"Seventy-two!" I exclaimed, "and as strong as that!"

"That's what a young sprinter who came through thought. He kept blowin' around about his exploits till Mr. McDougall took him up for a hundred yards on that cinder-path there. And beat him, too."

"That's like being preserved in ozone. I suppose when his hair's snow-white he'll still be packing moose."

"He'll do his share. I'll never forget how those hairs fooled a gentleman with Prussian leanings here in this store at the beginning of the war. He was having an argument with Mr. McDougall, and he got all excited until he cried out, 'If it was n't for your gray hairs I'd flatten you out.'"

"Don't let a gray hair stand in your way," said Mr. McDougall. "There may be a few premature ones around my ears, but they don't mean a thing when I meet a whelp like you."

Nipigon Lodge was an appropriate entrance to this region, a threshold with clean bunks and

delicious food on which fishermen perched long enough to get guides and outfit before they hopped off and were swallowed up by the bush. This place and the three Canadian Pacific bungalow camps, I might as well anticipate by saying, were the only roofs in the vast wild between French River and Lake of the Woods to which I would send my more sybaritic friends. In these were comfort, cleanliness, and comprehension of civilized desires, without a false note of upholstery or service. The Canadian Pacific camps are planned for longer sojourns, the Lodge is frankly a jumping-off place, but even as that its advantages are not understood. Not until I had lived on the adjacent lake and seen the region beyond and come back did I realize the glory of the country to which it is the virtually unused door. Those who leave the Canadian Northern at Nipigon Lodge have but one idea in mind, fishing on the river. They leave the lake unexplored. That is like leaving after the first act of "Tannhäuser" thinking you have heard the opera. Nobody had ever told me of Lake Nipigon, the head-waters of Lake Superior. I, too, hesitate to tell about it. To have it boomed, tin-canned, and burned would break the heart. Ruthlessly, in the next chapter, have I pushed the heads of the bright-eyed superlatives out of

sight. Only they whose eyes can run between the lines may read. One does not want the fountain of life defiled by the profane, though, as the red gods know, it cannot really be.

CHAPTER X

LAKE NIPIGON

THE gods like to be confronted. Jacob knew the way of dreams when he took the stones of that place and put them for his pillows; dreams on down are not greatly valuable. And he knew the ways of angels, how their blessing must be wrested from them. The curious secret is revealed that the gods are just. Confront them, and they magically supply you with the needed strength. The illusion of their opposition is the fundamental paradox of life. It is a paradox illustrated well in the mode of existence which is called roughing it. Those who retire to the woods with chefs and couches, with cold-cures and pain-killers and a retinue of slaves, who throw crumbs to Pan as if he were a squirrel and think they know the god, they have forfeited their time unwisely. But they who strip and tremble, as they enter the dim aisles of his domain, return with gifts. I write this because I did my share of trembling on that morning, when Angus Alexander MacDonald said, "You think you're able for the trip?"

"Yes, I think so," said I, wondering what unwise thing I was letting myself in for now!

For MacDonald had explained concisely that he and his Indians were taking a *quick* trip into the interior. How long? Oh, about fifty miles. How quick? In two days if possible. Angus Alexander had run his eye up and down my unox-like proportions. Meanwhile I was considering that word "quick." But here was a chance to see the ultimate wilds, and, besides, who could show the cold foot near Neil McDougall? It was then I said, "Yes, I think so," and went aboard the boat.

"The boss wants you for lunch while we're putting on the finishing touches," said MacDonald, when he'd joined me on the roof of the tug *Ogama*, which was to be my perch for many a day.

We chugged up Orient Bay, a fiord continually opening and disclosing the Lake Nipigon, which is really the first of the Great Lakes, though sixth in size. The boss was Tom Cummins, brother of Fish-and-Game Jack Cummins, and responsible only to Mr. Zabitz of Toronto for the safety of the great forest-reserve which incloses the lake and guards its hundreds of islands. Mr. and Mrs. Cummins had built a charming house in which they braved the winter through, and his office from which telephone wires ran to distant

mountain-tops was the ganglion of protection against fire.

It was a treat to have a woman preside at a meal in this almost womanless wilderness, and these people seemed alert concerning the world, though sticking so closely to the bush. The forest life is so glorious that it doesn't seem quite right; so much for the tenacious germ of puritanism in the blood. Nor is it quite right if the intoxication of it cut one off from the responsibilities of the grim progressive world. So I was fortified to find centers of refinement in the darkest wood, families living happily and thoughtfully beneath the sky.

"Eight hundred miles," replied Mr. Cummins when I asked him what the distance was around the shores of Lake Nipigon. From the bottom of Orient Bay to the top of the lake is upward of seventy miles, and it is nearly fifty across. I was told that there are two thousand islands and islets in it. There may be. I never want them counted. Here is Pan's retiring-ground; here the Delphi of nature draws those who would know beauty in her ancient wildness. The last satisfaction is that the Government has set aside this region, this primal paradise, to be a reservoir of influence outwelling and flowing down into the distressed borders of civilization.

We began our voyage in a calm. John Mickelson, pilot, and George Hays, engineer, were below. Our two Indian guides squatted unconversationally on the stern. MacDonald and I lay along the cabin's deck and looked at the eastern shore along which we were skirting. It seemed to me as if I were being borne in a commonplace boat within the borders of a dream. There was reality to the touch, but hardly to the eye. For here at last were assembled the separate parts of many a desire. Here as a guest of the Government I was being taken on a trip with forest rangers, two of whom were actual Indians, into a country beyond anything I had had the sense to wish for. I firmly believe that desire is father to the fact; but how account for something better than one has had the wit to dream? Let me state baldly the items of its perfection.

First was the amazing purity of water which sparkled between a mystery of islands. Second, the islands which ranged from tufted jots of stone, through families of cottage-size islets, up to the magnificent domains of the Kelvin and Shakspeare groups, where caribou and moose live the year round. Then, the variety of the shore, rising a thousand feet at Gros Cap, receding, running, ever a living wall of trees, into fine points and promontories clad in a varying blue. These shores sheltered all the large and small mammals

of the north. From the bays rivers wound back into unmapped distances. A savage winter protected the pristine nature of the region, and the unpeopled distances maintained a no-man's-land, crossed rarely by the Indians in their ancient character of trappers. Was it a wonder that I thrilled as the *Ogama* labored on? Here was a sanctuary found, a place where the simple soul of man could burn clear again and steadily, untouched by the cross-winds of a too complicated life. Here could the dweller in cities come and find that purification which Plato preached and Christ practised.

A breeze ran with us now, and presently MacDonald called to one of the Indians, a half-breed, "Jerry, has somebody been putting the loons in the water?"

Jerry's head shook a serious "yes." He had humor in his black eyes, had Jerry, a handsome straight nose, generous ears. There was enough French Canadian in him to make him unreliable, yet this had largely been trained out, and when I found that he was cousin to Dan Moriceau I knew that he would be entertaining. Jerry and John Head, our other man, made a keen pair of scouts, able at their job, and agreeable always. I was trying to figure out how Jerry knew that there were loons in the water, and asked him.

"See the wind?" he explained. "That means

some one has put loons in to make it blow, little carved wood loons."

"Really?" I tried to say seriously.

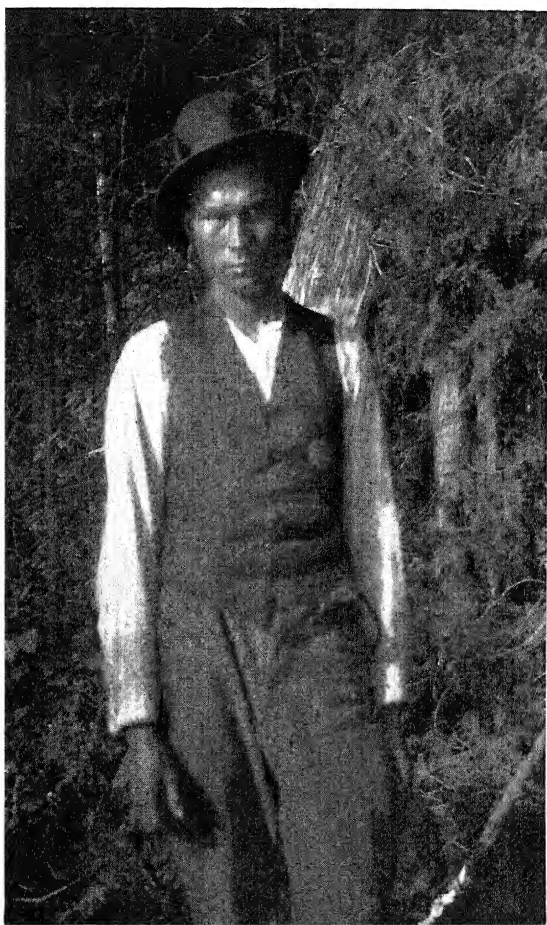
Jerry nodded with, "I don't quite believe it, maybe, but it takes loons to make the water fly like that."

"The poor birds are working hard," I said, looking at the constantly heightening waves.

"They work until somebody takes them out," said Jerry.

Nobody relieved the loons, and the waves were several feet high, green racing terraces of water, before we ran behind a point and into a horseshoe bay of great beauty. Mickelson knew of a pocket in the land, and the *Ogama* anchored in a calm. The Indians made camp on an island of visionary loveliness, while Hays and I swam off the point, swam in a cold cradle of silver green. The loons swam also, the wind increasing with sunset, which was unusual. Hays and Mickelson ate together in the boat, MacDonald and I on one side of the fire, John and Jerry on the other. These seemed to be the rudiments of old custom.

After supper we went with our pipes to the sunsetward of the island for a talk. I discovered that John Head knew no English, which disappointed me, for he looked interesting and I wanted to ask him about his home in the North,



Photograph by the Author

JOHN HEAD

Fort Hope. He was about twenty-five, medium height, with a good brow, finely modeled nose, high cheeks, sensitive lips and eyes well set apart. They were eyes capable of kindness, subtle humor, sternness. He was a man you would trust at sight, a clean, hard-working fellow, whose sense was not all on the surface. To know John Head was to find that there are fine Indians. He had been down only a year.

That night I said to myself, "Here and now am I happy"; but I was not happy, for the flowing beauty of the scene bore one above one's depth of appreciation, like the current of the "Unfinished Symphony." One longed to grasp the loveliness ever in the act of changing, to call attention to it. A moon with the high points of a caravel was rocking low in the sky, and a few blown stars shone from the deeper violet overhead. On the right a group of firs, a purplish black, notched the sky as they climbed from the shore. A restless surf raced and broke and dashed at our feet to fall back into the sea of fading color, while on the left whitecaps glimmered from the soft dusk. Beneath the wave-beat and the beat of wind, I was conscious of the heart-beat, through nature, through these Indians, through me. It was the hand of beauty playing on the strings of soundest health. The music was objectless love.

"Has this island a name?" I asked after a while. They knew of none, so I said, "I want to call it After-Supper Island."

Jerry laughed. "That will suit Naniboujou all right."

"Does Naniboujou get as far north as this?" I asked.

"Oh, he gets everywhere. And he is always hungry, too. Poor old Naniboujou!"

"Tell me," I suggested, scenting mythology at the source. A museum affects me like hay-fever, it stifles; but here was entertainment not to be sneezed at.

"Naniboujou was going on a long trip with his grandmother," began Jerry, his voice low, fresh, smiling to listen to, "and when time for supper came he saw some ducks, some geese, too. He sent his grandmother off to build a lodge for the night, saying to himself, 'How am I going to kill those ducks?' So Naniboujou took his tea-pail and started to drum on it, singing, 'I am bringing new songs; I am bringing new songs,' over and over again. The ducks and the geese heard him and swam over to him but not close enough. So he jumped into a sack he had with him and dived into the water. That pleased the ducks. They were quite surprised to see that he was such an excellent diver, and they came still closer. They came so close at last that he killed a few. Then

he went after the geese. Naniboujou challenged the geese to a contest in diving, for he was quite pleased with himself. He said he could beat them, and he could, too. Finally he dived beneath the geese and began to tie their legs together with some spruce-bark that he had in his pocket. When they noticed this they tried to rise and fly off. But they couldn't, particularly as Naniboujou was hanging on to the other end of the string. But at last they began to drag old Naniboujou and rose higher and higher into the air. He hung on for a while until his hand was cut and the string broke. And so he got nothing to eat that time."

"Where were the ducks?" asked MacDonald.

"They were away back on the lake."

"How did his grandmother take it?" I asked, interested not only in the wiles of Naniboujou but in Jerry's obvious palpable belief in a foundation for the story, just as we regard the Flood, if not sent for the salutary riddance of the ungodly, yet a scientific fact in the history of the race. To listen to Jerry was to breathe an aboriginal atmosphere.

"Oh, his grandmother?" he said. "Well, Naniboujou fell down into the hollow of a big tree. There he lay until he heard chopping near-by. He called for help, and when he was released he set out to look for his grandmother. She was

waiting for him. He told her what had happened. 'Why did n't you pick up the ducks?' she scolded. 'You know you never can eat goose even when you do get it.' "

Jerry quit short. "Did Naniboujou have more trouble?" I asked.

"A heap of it," said Jerry. I determined to have more, but to wait for the mood. John rose quietly. The moon was down.

"An early start to-morrow, boys," said MacDonald, and we went to our tent, the Indians to theirs.

"Do you really suppose that Jerry believes in those loons?" I said to Angus.

"Sure. And he believes that the fire ranger who was out here last and who disturbed an Indian's grave for relics, and cut his hand in which blood-poisoning set in, was affected by a curse. Jerry says he will die, and I don't believe that he will get well, myself."

"Strange," I said, sleepily, thinking of Tut and the curse that Shakspeare laid on the mover of his bones, in jest or not who knows? What a kinship of feeling lying underneath the race! But before I could think about it I was lulled into that greater unity with all things which is sleep.

The south wind was warm, and a song-sparrow was singing a parched little song when I woke. The Indians had breakfast ready. From here we

were to go up the Onaman River, leaving the *Ogama* and crew to their own devices. I could not foresee how four men with duffle could travel in an eighteen-foot canoe, but I was voyaging with specialists, race-old geniuses of travel; and with John in the bow, Angus and I amidships on the tent and food, and Jerry in the stern, we constituted a cozy crew who made about eight miles an hour, for we all paddled.

At the start I thought I was going to last about fifteen minutes, and MacDonald's query, "Do you think you can stand the trip?" rang uncannily in my ears. The Indian stroke is a savage dig at the water, repeated at a stiff tempo; and John and Jerry, out of their exuberance, pushed the pace until I thought that all the wind in heaven would not supply me. But if your spirit is n't nagged by wrong equipment, and your organs are sound, the human machine accommodates itself to many a curious feat, and by my second wind I had given over the worst of it to my reflex centers. We came to a carry in eight miles.

We fell into the order with which we prosecuted all the portages of the day, John with the canoe, Jerry with the bulk of the duffle, MacDonald and I with a comfortable load. The trail led across a plateau, sandy, with lichen and moss to suit the fussiest of caribou, jack-pine, yellow and canoe birch, an occasional larch. Then the river, a

three-mile push to the fork, with constantly increasing current, two miles up the left branch to another portage. The way was enlivened for me by the Indians pointing out otter-slides, beaver-signs, the tracks of mink and muskrat and bear. Then lunch.

I was tired. Every muscle in my body was rising in protest. At home I should have had to assemble the wood and stab the tin cans; here it was the proper thing to look on. So I chose a back-rest of thick moss and lit a pipe and smelled the perfume of kindled birch-bark and saw the flames with a reviving joy. This joy had been earned. The very thought of tea was like a burst of sunshine on gray moors. And my muscles began to say little prayers of thanksgiving to me for letting up on them. *The dimness of the lofty forest, the wandering sunshine, the exquisite whiffs of frying bacon, the beauty of those silent, sweaty Indians in the blue smoke—these things gave me a sort of drunkenness, a blur of pleasure.

The meal was prepared without a lost motion, and eaten likewise. Then I called for Naniboujou.

“I tell a little one,” said Jerry smiling. “The next day after the geese had got away, Naniboujou and his grandmother were very hungry. Presently he was walking by a river, and he saw some berries in the water. He was so hungry

that he dived right off into the water, but he struck the bottom unexpectedly. He was stunned all over, and he lay there, almost till he was drowned. When he looked up he saw that the berries were hanging in a tree out of reach above. So he started off again. And I guess it is time for us to do that, too."

I was interested to see that these men took the responsibility of distance on their shoulders. That afternoon gave me my most intensive experience of bush business. We tackled muskeg and rapid, portaged over burn and swamp, packed and unpacked the duffle twenty times, and finally got lost. That was the worst, not because the bush was different but because any unnecessary pull-ups and portagings began to assume the aspect of gratuitous insult. John and Jerry, on whom the brunt fell, remained equable of temper, even cheerful, and marvels of observation.

When we reached a lake I endeavored to be the first to see the moose, but I never was. John almost always said something low to Jerry and then with a smile pointed out the animal to me. The first was feeding in the water, and while he held his head beneath the surface, we paddled toward him furiously. When he looked up we would glide. As the ungainly brute could stay under about a minute, and as he had poor eyes when up, I was afraid that we were going to ram

him. Both Indians were keenly interested. About three canoe-lengths away he gave a look, a start, a run, and clattered through the underbrush. Whatever noiselessness these monsters may acquire in the rutting season, they took no pains to be quiet in July. We saw twenty-three on our trip, the most interesting being an old fellow who had been sleeping on a gravelly point in the river. Being drowsy, he was confused and started to run at us instead of away. As he sailed down on us, his antlers seemed to have the spread of a corn-field. He recognized his error before he bruised his shins on our gunwale.

Jerry always ran on the portages. This was because he had once worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, where the rule seemed to be, "No run, no eat." "Suppose," he said, "we had the night camp on this side a portage. Breakfast would be cooked on the other. Each man would pick up his two-hundred-pound sack and run with it to the breakfast place, and the last few men in would get no breakfast."

"How abominable!" I said.

"The Hudson's Bay Company knew the Indian," said MacDonald. "Did n't they, Jerry?"

Jerry disclosed his excellent teeth in a slow grin.

The ambitions of these wilderness workers were finally assuaged. I had read in travelers' jour-



photograph by Will Harkness

LAKE NIPIGON AQUATICS



Photograph by Geo. Shiras, 3rd

FLASH-LIGHT OF DOE AT WHITE FISH LAKE

nals of long marches made under the auspices of Indians, and now I knew what they felt like. I was not sure how much pleasure of the sort I could undergo on the morrow and still live, but that was for the morrow. The hardest thing in the world is to let the morrow bury its own dead, but this time I succeeded. I was willing to let them set up our tent without turning a hand. And yet so restorative is that atmosphere that it seemed worth while to pick the blueberries hanging about after a few minutes' recuperation. There was satisfaction in such a day; I had caught my limit of reminiscences. The fatigue would go, the memories remain, improving with age like the portraits of relatives. After supper John and Jerry went paddling for the fun of looking for game. That is the solemn truth.

The night was sullenly warm. Even the breeze from the lake felt as if it had been blowing over acres of glowing metal. It was too hot for the tent, and so I made another bed of boughs by the water and apparently did not take enough pains with the mosquito-netting. The wind seemed strong enough to keep them back in the bush. Angus and I took a swim for relief and then he dozed off; but not I. And not the mosquitos. One by one they discovered the new cafeteria. From my lethargy I could hear them groping their way to me; hear them discuss their

choices, shin-bone, cheek, or neck; and then *feel* them, after a vocal moment of thanks to the Deity of mosquitos for providing this nutrition in the wilderness, and after blessing it to His use; feel them, I say, plunge into the soup course.

This lasted quite a while; I was too worn to care. It was the speeches more than the banquet that annoyed. But when the revelry began, when, with one foot on the brass rail, they would sing drinking-songs in my ear, I thought it was time to close down. I rose in my wrath, and, stripping myself of blankets and insectivora, plunged into the lake like an irate moose. The delicious water, closing over me, was balm indeed. I swam lazily and climbed up on a little rock far out. Over the dark ridge to the north glimmered lightning from invisible clouds; a parching wind riffled the lake; subdued sounds came from the imminent wood. * The world looked very big. Yet, as I gazed up to the tranquil stars, thought of the thunder-cloud marching on its appointed way, of the wind's path and the globe's turning, I felt a thrill at this amazing and significant presence of order in the entire universe. What if there were mosquitos and disasters, rats in the water-main and death in the street, and ebbings of the celestial tide in human affairs, as it seemed at present! There was order, a cause behind, and either a cure for the cause or a com-

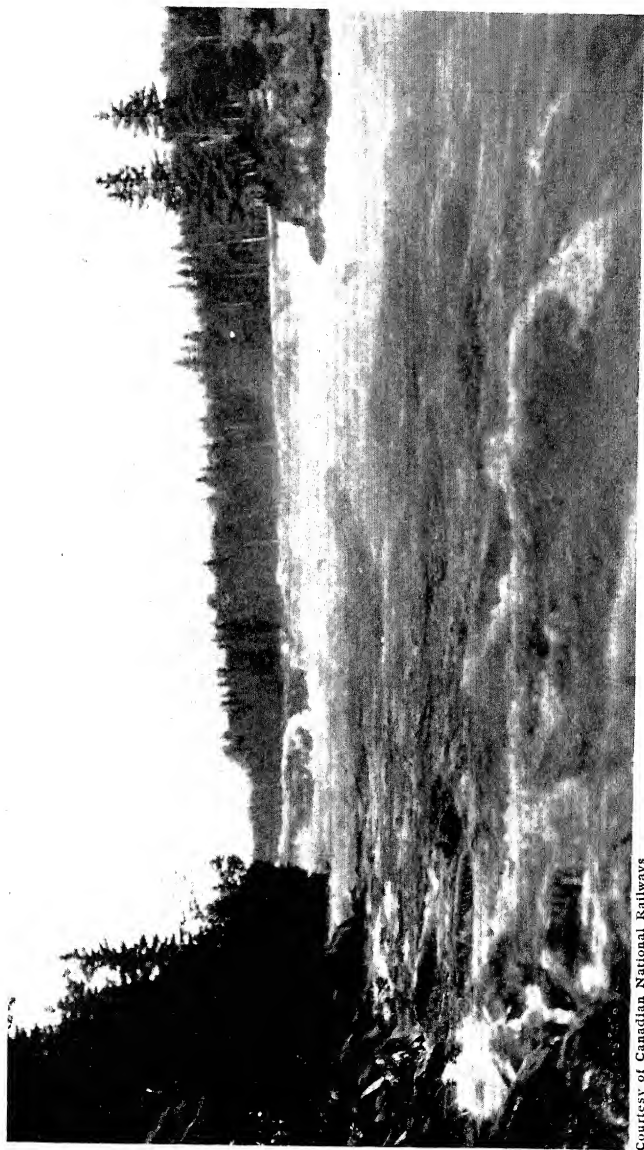
pensation for the effect. The wise man, it occurred to me, would look for the divine seed in each predicament and would spill only enough tears on it to make it grow.

Indeed, I am convinced that the most fascinating game of all is to untangle causes and effects and find the law. To know the law in all its parts, to practise it, to sow the effort and reap the heights, to batter at hard hearts and find your kin, is to live in high places. Against the rigors of life there is one sovereign remedy, the enjoyment of looking for its rationality and of tracing its progress. They who say there is no progress are wilfully blind, refusing to see that mercy increases in the race, that the sense of kinship widens, that knowledge multiplies, and that the law is being learned to our benefit. The world is a rattle on which the soul sharpens its teeth; it is a ladder for willing feet. And when all of us poor Naniboujous of the spirit once stop diving for reflected berries, we shall find the living food.

I swam back to the patient mosquitos, sufficiently chilled to wrap up, head and all, in a blanket and fool them, and when I woke the sun was shining. I woke to an ominous noise, the sound of a great crunching, as if a rhinoceros were demolishing a corn-crib with his tusks. When I moved, the rhinoceros stopped; when I rested, he got going again. I could not make out

what it was, and so I sat up. A wood-mouse leaped away from my pack-sack; he had nearly chewed the strap through. Angus raised his head and asked if I always swore like that before breakfast.

Of that day I could make a book, but won't. We pursued the river to the boundary of the reserve, finding that the bears had clawed and ripped down the red fire-signs which had marked the portages. "Their bloody curiosity," said Jerry. Then we crossed to another branch, where an illicit prospector had been reported by Indians. Here was the primeval heart of the northern wilderness. Had I traveled to Hudson Bay, to Great Bear Lake, anywhere, I could have found no greater loneliness. An interminable wilderness of jack-pine and spruce, birch and poplar, with some balsam, covered the sandy undulating land, and the Indians showed me sign of all the game and fur-bearers. To hunt gold here seemed the last of human undertakings. Fond as I am of the forest, I should have perished of insulation from my kind in that dim under-dwelling. To try to find some one in that waste appeared to me to be the most hopeless occupation possible, yet our sleuth-eyed guides knew their business. Backing the canoe down stream-lets, picking up details that would have escaped Sherlock Holmes himself, we at last came to a



VIRGIN FALLS

Courtesy of Canadian National Railways

place where the sedge showed signs of having been trodden and arrived at our goal, the prospector's shack.

It was a carefully built cabin of moss-chinked logs. A stove, which must have cost some agonies in the carting, contained ashes which John said had cooked the man's breakfast. On the window-ledge was some quartz with gold in it; in the water-pail floated a mouse. "Just drowned," said Jerry. Snowshoes, dog-sledge collars, a fish-net, a ladder, boxes of samples, a box labeled, "Dynamite. Dangerous," and, outdoors, a wood-pile, saw, and *forge!* The labor this man had expended in getting these implements in to nowhere would have set him up as the king of homesteaders. The magazine "Adventure" of a year back lay open on the bed. There remained to see the man who sucked so directly at the breast of Mother Earth for his ailment. We must wait. So I asked Jerry to continue with Naniboujou.

"Well," he began, "when Naniboujou could n't get those berries he was hungrier than ever, but he soon saw a deer coming to the river to drink. He stopped the deer and said: 'What is the matter with your eyes, they look so very red? They must certainly be quite sore. I have some medicine here for sore eyes.' The deer answered that his eyes were not sore, and that it was their natural condition, but Naniboujou broke in again,

saying: 'I never saw them like that before. My own eyes were for some time in that condition, but I cured them with this'; and he showed the deer some berries that he held in his hand. Finally he persuaded the deer to let him rub the berries in his eyes, which soon became so painful that the deer dropped to the ground. Then Naniboujou pounded him with a club and killed him and skinned him and dressed him, saying, 'Now I shall have something to eat at last.' Then he roasted the carcass, cutting off the head for his grandmother, who as usual was far ahead. Then he sat down to eat, but there was a tree near-by, and every time the wind blew, one of its branches would screech. Naniboujou did n't like this, and he said to the branch, 'Don't you bother me just when I want to eat, for I am very hungry.' But every time, just before he took a bite, the branch began to screech. Then Naniboujou got up and climbed into the tree to take off the branch that was screeching. Just as he got it broken off, his wrist was caught between two branches, and he was compelled to stay in the tree for a long time. As he hung there, unable to free himself, he saw a pack of wolves running along the river. Before they caught up to him, Naniboujou called out to them to run right on and not look in his direction. When they heard this, the wolves said, 'Naniboujou must have something there, for he

would not tell us to run ahead if he did n't.' So they went over to him and ate all of the deer that had been roasted. When they had finished, Naniboujou said, 'Now go right ahead, and don't look up that tree near-by.' So the wolves looked up and saw the deer's head hanging in the branches. They pulled it down and ate all the meat that was on it. Then they went away. Naniboujou—"

There was a shadow in the door, and there stood a husky, as magnificent an animal as ever tore a man to pieces. You might suppose Jerry had conjured up one of Naniboujou's wolves. The hair behind the sharp muzzle and pointed ears rose, but his master appeared, the prospector. He seemed not at all dashed to find us there. He was a big man. There was nothing picayune about his person or his welcome. I went out while he and MacDonald conferred about the problem of registration. "What a life!" I caught myself saying, and then stopped short at the thought of how like mine it was. Was there not something in his search, like mine, which was satisfying in itself? Who ever heard of poets or prospectors striking for shorter hours? If it came to the question of curtailing our freedom, neither this man nor I would be open to reason. I did wonder how he marketed his material. If he should find pure gold there in the bears' back yard, it would require a fleet of trained rocs to

carry it out. I wondered what happiness he was storing up against his unsuccess. When we left it was without even a hand-shake, casual come, casual go, a manifestation, surely, of a magnificent self-reliance.

CHAPTER XI

LAKE NIPIGON (CONTINUED)

THE return cruise down the Onaman River had its delights in addition to a helpful current and the fact that I was getting hardened, but I must suppress them in favor of finishing this book. The acute and ever-pressing problem of what to tell and what to omit becomes cruel here, where incident and Jerry's fun and pictures of the primeval cry out to be portrayed. Thoreau was wise to spend his years upon one pond, and though I prefer more exercise than St. Simeon Stylites enjoyed on his pillar, I can imagine how the good man groaned with despair in the face of the excitements he could not keep up with. This universe has been so impeccably constructed that it can be viewed from anywhere, so you have eyes to see.

Our homelike After-Supper Island rose from the evening lake like one of Maxfield Parrish's pellucid thoughts, the smoldering red of its rock, the green of its fir, and the blue of the water being washed of all earthliness by the light of the growing moon. Here was repose made visible.

Only one thing clouded the coming events, and that was a separation. John and Jerry were to stay on the island and erect a ranger's cabin, whence the waterways could more easily be patrolled. I was very sorry. Not in many a moon should I find such companions. Jerry, the practical, quick, witty breed, had foreseen our wants, had kept us amused, and had put the trip through with a minimum of discomfort. John, the quiet, strong, sensitive young fellow, had brought me closer to his race. If he be typical of the Crees at their best, then a white man could easily be proud to have them for friends on equal terms. I would have given a lot to have been able to talk with him and to read the thoughts he had; for various questions through Jerry showed that he did think, thoughts born of Keewaydin, the north wind, thoughts inhabiting the snow distances, the long thoughts of an Indian youth, who will likely die prematurely of tuberculosis.

We sat late about our little fire. Jerry told some more stories about Naniboujou after an apology for their indelicacy, though their animal vulgarity was slight and showed that the redskin humor differed little from that of other folk of the soil. I have often pondered as to what is really common, and have come to the conclusion that it is chiefly a matter of environment. Those invalids of society, who have lived so long on their

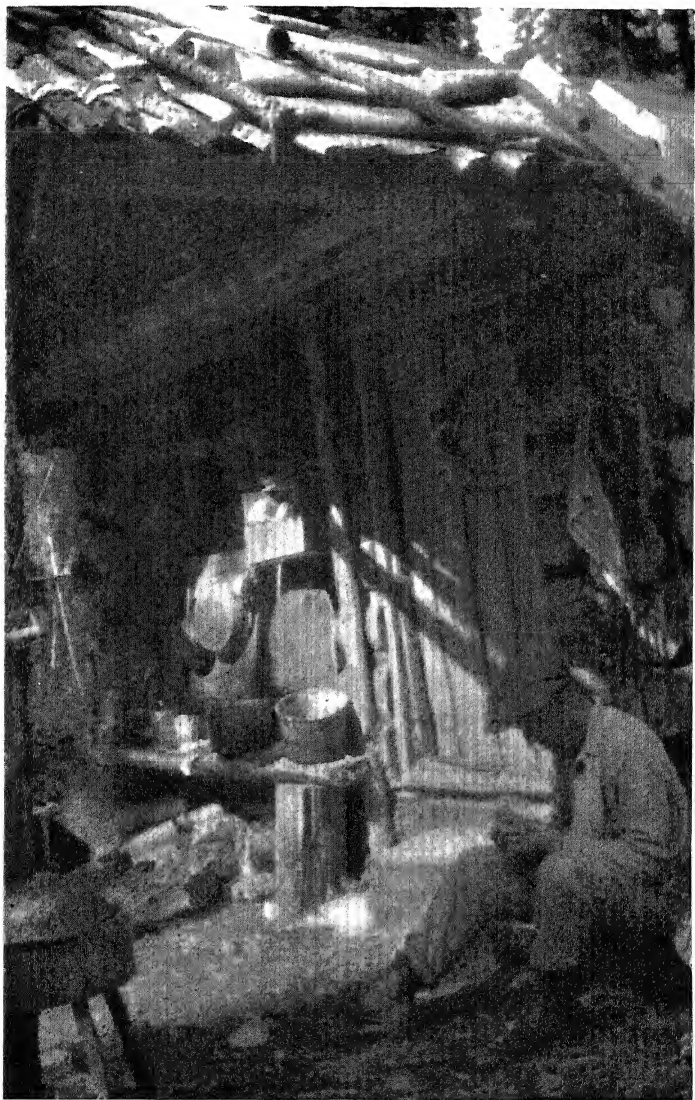
incomes as to forget that there are such things as sweat, fights, and natural amours in the world, forget that they have a place in the universal scheme and are mentionable in their place. These ladies will smile broadly at a fly on the concert-master's nose and miss the beauty of the passage. This, I contend, is also being vulgar. The small minds which dredge each situation for gossip and filth are the really low. Only the moral survive, that is certain; but I believe that only those who really love humanity are moral. Primness is not purity, it is withdrawal; and withdrawal leads nowhere. The correct old censors are wrapping life in so many swaddling-clothes that it will soon be a mummy. It is the open air that is fresh. Better expose us to the rude contact of lips, to the naked loveliness of bathers, to the frank and natural, at the risk of injuring the few for the benefit of the many. Then the unnatural will pass away. The proof of this lay in that apology of Jerry's, for the few humors he related would not have amused our cuddlesome society maidens, while his apology for indelicacy would! The Indian was the innate gentleman.

We parted with the fewest of words, and headed north, coming in the afternoon into Ombabika Bay, where the wind, they told me, always blows in a direction contrary to the wind outside, thus

proving that the place is the home of devils. It was doing that very thing when we arrived, the southerly breeze yielding to a northeast wind at the entrance. It grew devilish cold; that much will I grant the theory. And we slept cold that night, MacDonald and I, on a savage island.

Sunday was consumed in crossing the lake along the north, where lonely islands composed vistas of loveliness, coming at last to Whitesand, whose special characteristics seemed to be a grayish compound of white sand and black flies. But up it we roved a-fishing, pulling a few trout from below the rapids, and finding the pleasure exertion quite worth while. A restful time is the easiest to take, but also the easiest to give up, and what surprises me is that so few porch vacationists have found this out.

Down the west side of Lake Nipigon we viewed high promontories, a rich forest, many isles. At Wabinoosh Bay I met a young ranger, only seventeen, the embodiment of shyness, the son of an Irishman and an Indian woman, whose nature seemed a beautiful human budding of the wilderness. A naïve, gentle soul, with a marvelous health in his blood, a shining humor in his eyes, the reticence of a glen-dweller in his heart, this boy patrolled rivers and lakes, merging with the soul of them when alone, yet companionable enough, I suppose, when with either Indians or



Photograph by the Author

THE PROSPECTOR

those whites he knew. It refreshed me to find that so native a growth could be so delicate.

And so to Nipigon House, the second post of the Hudson's Bay Company, and established two hundred years ago. Mr. Maguire, the factor, was off on his brief yearly vacation, and I regret not having met a man whose name was on everybody's lips, and always with, "Yes, you ought to meet Paddy." He was a squaw-man, that is, a white man who, determining to live in the bush all his life, had wed an Indian woman, she being less likely to languish in that office than the white. Ordinarily a squaw-man is regarded as a chap who has gone the easiest way, forsaking his race for a soft berth and sure decline in character. But the countryside was unanimous that Mr. Maguire had reversed the usual. And when I saw his squaw I thought he had chosen well, for she was a woman, not only comely to look on, but with an obvious pride and dignity; and I have rarely seen such lovely children. Then it was that I found the boy Pan of Wabinosh was their son, as well as the squirrel-like youngsters who frisked about the porch. A brace of these, shy as deer, nimble as field-mice, and gay as larks, undertook to pilot me up to the old lookout where many a winter-bound factor had climbed to watch for the coming of the mail. The hill was five hundred feet high, and the view from it tugged at the

imagination. Below was Dog Island, where once the voyageurs and Indians had chained their huskies, a long, snake-like island. Southward a hundred islets gossiped in groups, while to the north the shacks of an Indian village were clear. To the west rolled the unbroken wilderness, ridge after ridge of hushed green hills. It was Sunday, a day the forest seems to remember even when we forget.

The children climbed the wooden tower like red squirrels, and when we had come to an understanding that neither party was likely to eat the other, we chattered. On the way down a charming thing happened. The younger boy took my hand as we passed a great granite boulder.

"I saw a windigo behind there this morning," he said.

"A windigo?" and I put on a proper interest, for a windigo is one of the lesser devils. "How 'd you know?"

"I knew," said the boy, his eyes dancing.

"He had overalls on," said the brother.

"As if he were going to work," said I. "You fellows will take care to be good to-day?"

"Yes, for he 'll get us if we 're bad," said the first, though the laugh in his eyes did n't betoken much worriment.

"I reckon he came for these raspberries," I advanced as a theory.

"Maybe he did," they both said, dancing off, laughing, now that we were past the danger place. They were new sprites to be introduced to that Master of Sprite-land, Barrie, who so blessedly believes that the joy, the sincerity, the lovable-ness of youth do not vanish from the earth. I did not blame the windigo for leaving watch of his penal flames and coming to this cool wilderness on a pleasant Sabbath morning.

That night it stormed, but next day we persuaded Mickelson that spray was a healthy thing for mariners and put out to sea. We found waves running that would not have disgraced the ocean, and the *Ogama* dropped into the green furrows with a splash which flew over the boat. All day we plowed, making use of island shelter, finally entering the mazes of the Shakspeare group, largest and most sovereign of all. Lake Nipigon, the stern and exquisite remoteness, was created by the Poet for all poets; and Homer, Chaucer, Whitman, should have their isles appointed, too.

At the day's end we came into a new realm of beauty. As if the innumerable islands were not enough, nature now set banks of mist floating down the lake. Here and there they thinned to let through the intense blue above. All the colors which a pearl craves in its heart shone for rare instants on those soft, shifting banks. And when they broke we stared on distant ranges of cumuli,

cloud summits higher than any Himalayas, where inconstant glaciers fell with unheard thunders into dissolving gulfs. Peaks that could never be possessed made cliffs of light that were apparently changeless behind our drifting mist. On the lake fell a perfect calm. It was majestic, beautiful. Only, since it was my last hour on the *Ogama*, there was sadness in it, too. One cannot sail for eight days on a little boat without some private affection for it, to say nothing of MacDonald and the other men, whose cheer and helpfulness had made my voyage so fruitful and so happy.

CHAPTER XII

NIPIGON RIVER

ON the Hereafter Express, bound for the Happy Hunting-Grounds, there will be a special car marked "Nipigon River"; and every compartment will be taken. I say compartment advisedly, for the Management regrets that the expense of maintaining such select scenery necessitates, etc. The car will be full, however, of doctors, as in real life, with a sprinkling of bankers, and lucky scamps like me who are doing the celestial publicity. And when we detrain we will find the same jocular freedom, the same heavenly turmoil, as I dropped into that evening from the *Ogama* at Orient Lodge.

From the stir it looked as if the Canadian National were entertaining the Canadian Pacific. In one corner was a group armed to the teeth with writing-pads, fishing-rods, moving-picture cameras, and portable stoves. Across the foreground Indians were carrying canoes every minute or so. In another corner stood a company from Hollywood, all the little movie squabs in

very new boots, trying to wear a look of determination with their powder.

I went over to McKirdy's store sure of a laugh, and there it was. Hollywood was trying to outfit, buying boxes of candy and face-lotions and trout-flies.

"Say, have you got a red, white, and blue one?" whined one little girl.

"Aw, these is Canadian fish," her friend reminded her.

Outdoors I saw Jack McKirdy in action. His hair was brushed back, his shirt open at the throat, his laugh never long quiet; and he was giving orders to relays of respectful Indians who stood around in a dusky silence. I had to smile whenever one of the picture girls, with her high heels and ridiculous make-up, blundered among these burned sons of the forest. They remained so grave and decorous, and yet beneath the mask of dignity was the amused man, and I intercepted more than one sly and hungry glance at these wandering mouthfuls of caviar. I learned that the indefatigable Jack had promised to have all these people under canvas on the river that night; and I wondered how, for encamping after dark is no fun for experts and a sorry thing for tyros.

Yet it was done. As the grown moon began his nightly conquest of the sunset the little launch left the dock. It was towing eight canoes, each

loaded with two Indians and outfit, while in the launch rode the guests. I met some very interesting people: Ozark Ripley, fishing expert; his wife who had gone with him to Hudson Bay; Mrs. MacBeth and the Travises, writers; Mr. Alexander, who has taken some fascinating movies of wild life; Mr. Ramsay—all of whom were to purvey the Nipigon to the public. As we emerged from the fiord, the vast lake and its islands shone beneath a mackerel sky of many colors. Behind, the statuesque Indians smoked in silence, while forward the moverines shrieked and dragged their dresses down to the knee and enjoyed themselves.

I had, as I grinned to think, accepted the ride out to see the casualties of the encampment. I saw a miracle. We approached the edge of a great forest, already dark with night. Even the screen chorus was modified a little by the awe of it. Canoe by canoe, the Indians swung ashore, one of each pair doing the outfit into a tump-line burden and making off with it, the other shouldering the canoe, without shouting, without an unnecessary movement. In fifteen minutes I was watching them erect tents, kindle fires, or locate lost powder-boxes for the chewing-gum goddesses. In thirty the camp was made, and McKirdy ready to go home. I complimented him on the marvelous management.

"Oh, that 's not much," he said. "When the prince came, we had fifty-eight in the party and twenty-two canoes. Have you seen the falls?"

We walked through the bush in the direction of a roar that increased until it filled one's being, and came out on a ledge above a luminous torrent. The moonlight had not reached the water. We seated ourselves to watch the shimmering line work downward. It climbed from green spire to gray bole, to a tapestry of moss, to the rock glistening where it touched, to the spray, the swirling surface, and the milk-white stream. As the moon's pale fingers touched the leaping water and made it his, they bound me by the same spell, and I said to Jack, "I doubt if you 'll ever get me away from here."

"All right," he said, "sleep out here, and I 'll send you a couple of guides as soon as some good ones report. Most are down river now."

"I don't mind if it 's days," I said, "if you 'll only send out my food and duffle." And so it was that I came to know Virgin Falls.

Nature for some is just a magnificent toy, a golf-course. For others she is a store of beautiful shapes and colors. For a few she is a living body through which pours the great and beneficent stream of being. To play with her is refreshing; to admire her, exhilarating; to love her is to tap the secret springs of life. Nature is not



Photograph by H. Armstrong Roberts

THE NIPIGON

God. That Radiance must still be veiled, or slay. But when wandering in her gardens of a time, the sunny tip of a fir seems very like the burning bush, the silence of some starry night speaks as the still, small voice, and the Alone calls out to the alone. A little of this elixir of eternity is enough; this spiritual oxygen distilled is far too strong for daily breath. From his bodily tower it suffices a man just now and then to glance out toward the stars. That night, I declined their offer of a tent, but wrapped up in a blanket, and posited myself on a safe ledge not far from the river. Deep moss was my mattress, an over-spreading birch my roof, and through its chinks and crannies fell the soft light of the moon. The rushing music of the white cascade played an unending symphony into my drowsy ears; I was lulled out of my body, but I forget where I went.

In the morning I saw them off downstream. The fire-warden lent me his rod, but the fish concealed any desires they might have had to go a-frying; and I sat by the falls, now resplendent with sun, and watched them. In a green whirl at the foot swam some whitefish close by shore, and I was to see my Indians catch one with a little net later; but there was a hypnotic laziness induced by that running, crashing water, and I was content to loaf. At sunset Jack came.

“Here ’s luck for you,” he said. “There ’s

one of the new rich down river who has sent a hurry call for ale."

"Ale!" I exclaimed. "I thought it was a dry province."

"Ginger-ale," he explained, "a barrel of it. If you want to oversee its getting to him, it'll be a chance to split expenses."

Now this was fortunate, for life is not held cheap on the Nipigon, especially with two guides, canoe-rent, food, the special license, tips, motor-boat, and extras. In fact the difference between the backwoods and the Biltmore lies not in the costs but in the satisfactions. Why the rich man should want ale carted into the wilderness was none of my business. My fortunate job was to assuage his thirst.

"I'll send it out early in the morning," said Jack, "with two men. Take your time going down, and fish. Some time one of them will send up for a grand piano."

"I shall make no comment," I laughed; "it is not nice to bite the hand that feeds one. I'll get it to him, and no questions asked."

"All right," said Jack; "you'll likely find him at Pine Portage. I guess you'd better start, rain or shine."

In the morning I knew why he added that. It was raining, raining with grandeur, with contrition for having lost a day, raining wildcats and

sledge-dogs. But my guides arrived, sleek with moisture, mountainous with ale. Stewart Miel was about twenty-two, a happy-faced breed with a voice very low, very gentle, and with limbs whose gestures were always easy, always effective. Antoine Nanni was only seventeen, a lad with absolute speechlessness, which would have seemed taciturnity had it not been for the slight, slight smile of friendliness when he was pleased. I never understood Nanni, but I think he liked me—as trees like one another—and I am sure that I liked him. Both fellows made excellent guides and did everything they could to give me a good time. We turned our attention to the ale.

With legs bending beneath them, moccasins disappearing in black mud, and water pouring from the sky as at a firemen's exhibition, these gallant smiling youths portaged the soft drink and loaded the canoe.

"We ought to have a barge, Stewart," I said.

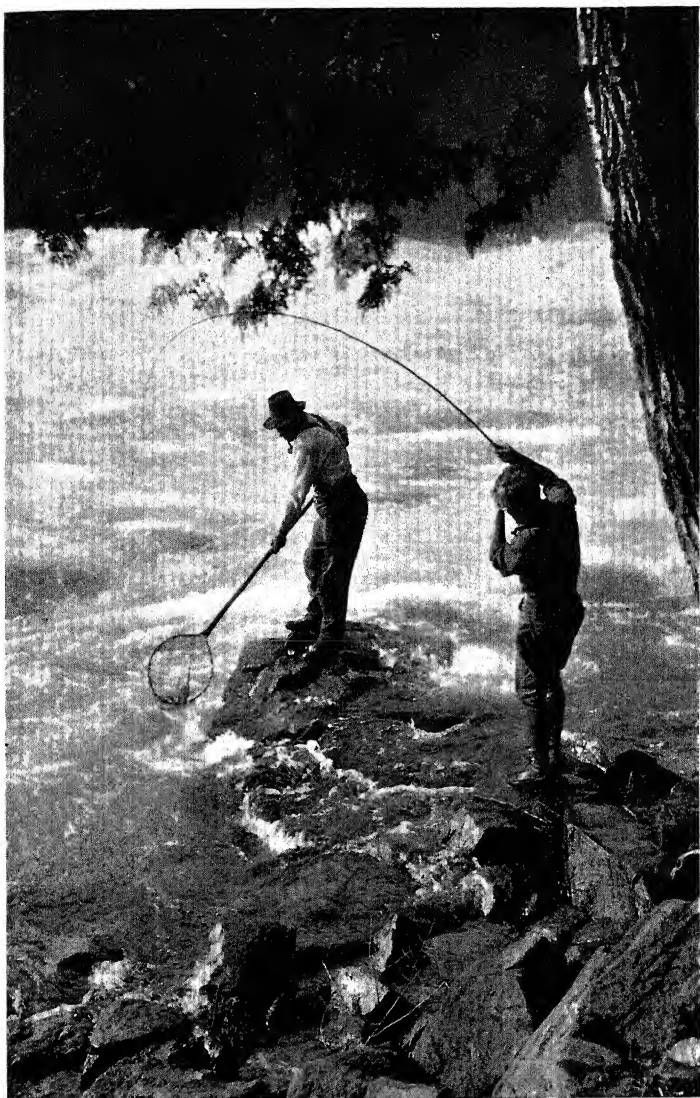
"I think we will do it," he replied, and showed me where I was to sit, an inch or so above the water. "All right," thought I, "they know (for they always do), but I could not help seeing the head-lines in the "Times-Journal" of Fredericton: "Tourist Drowned on Nipigon while Transporting Ale. Thought to be Overloaded." I had time to read further. "A writer whose name is not known perished yesterday in the same

rapid from which it will be remembered that Dr. J. W. Cook of this town caught the largest brook-trout on record. It weighed $14\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, was $31\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $11\frac{1}{2}$ around. We refer of course to the fish and not to the unfortunate gentleman—”

“That’s it,” Stewart was saying, “Rabbit Rapid”; and he pointed out the place where the lucky angler did secure his monster. Incidentally it is every guide’s ambition to have a second Dr. Cook in the boat. Not being one, I was rather glad that we could not manipulate our ale vessel in such a place.

The rain now changed its tactics. Instead of a continuous sluicing, it tried saving up for a while and then letting go in one stupendous shower as if to purge us from the face of nature. But we came up smiling, for it was warm rain, and the gray mists succeeding imparted a soft age to the minsters of rock which rose along our way. After a few portages we came to the Devil’s Rapid, a trifling place to be so dignified, I thought, until Stewart explained that the devil reached out for an Indian now and then at this spot. Here he advised me to make a first try for trout.

It is more or less of an ordeal to have to fish before the critical eyes of two Indian experts, even if you have engaged them to watch. When I am alone I am glad if the flies fall in the stream



Photograph by H. Armstrong Roberts

THE LAST ACT

in front of me as often as they catch in the trees behind. But now with Nanni's cool, contemptuous eyes on me, I felt that I must prove no kindergarten troutist. They kept the boat steady, and I cast, busy with a preliminary tangle.

"You had a rise," said Stewart, politely. I felt Nanni's silence turn several degrees cooler.

"There was another," said I, at least to be ahead of them.

"You have him," said Stewart, with a blasting calm. I had him, true, as known by the running line, the prickle of goose-flesh, the old familiar joy. The fish ran a while, then countered, and I reeled. He ran again. The joy mounted. For one hook in the trout there were twenty barbs of anxiety in me, however, and there was still no applause from the bleachers. Yet I felt the interest there. This fish was a big one, there was no doubt; I tried him, felt his pull, let him run, intercepted his designs to join me in the boat. Stewart was conversing with Nanni in Ojibway, a beautiful flow of language, which being interpreted meant, "Hand me the landing-net." This movement encouraged me. They think I'll get him, was my reaction to Stewart's pose with the net, while manœuvering the canoe with Nanni. I began to impose my will on the trout. I pulled; the fish pulled; I waited; he waited.

After two days of this—though Stewart says

it was only five minutes—the fish got bored. Besides, he wanted a look at me, and came to the surface. I got sight of a shining vision.

“Good fish,” said Stewart; “five pounds maybe.”

You might suppose, from the apprehension I suffered, that it was I who had the barb in my gills. Not I but the fish was calm. He knew well enough what he wanted to do. And now he did it—a skilful ballet step off the hook backward. The line sagged; so did my heart. The guides resumed their mask of flawless courtesy, their damnable politeness. If Stewart had reared up and cursed like a football coach, I should have felt much better. Instead he said, “Shall we go?” I could only nod abashedly. A five-pound trout! And at home an eight-ounce fish brought in the neighbors!

But one cannot remain depressed on that wild river long. We came to the White Chute as the clouds broke. Pools of zenith blue shone up there, but the river did not reflect them. It became only a deeper green, a tamarack hue, the green of the perpetual wood through which it ran. And at the White Chute, where the water races with an unimaginable joyousness, I caught my trout, a three-pounder, and then another, while the heart pounded and pride stood once more erect in me. Whatever self-respect is, it depends

entirely on the number and weight of fish you take out with your little rod; and though no alchemy can change me into a sportsman any more than it can change me into being President of our United States, I did feel better for those fish. So we came to Pine Portage.

The river at Pine Portage is one long way of wonder. Here is a beauty so supreme, so tyrannous, that you forget all other. The sliding waters run from pool to giant pool with an unconquerable abandon. The trail beside them has been trodden smooth by hope. For here have come great soldiers, poets, princes, men of means, and, better, men of generosity. Here have come beautiful women, statuesque Indians, fops, clergymen, fools, and the quiet sort of men who bear a flame burning in their hearts which can be forgotten only in such woods. This is one of the world's most famous miles, and rightly. For here the gods have bent their heavens to men's desire, and nothing of vivacious waters, of grand and restful forest, of wildness and infinity and beauty, has been left unrepresented. If you do not find this out, so much the worse for you. And yet, as in so many great things of life, the half cannot be told. We made camp at the head of the portage as at any other place. There should have been an invocation.

Rapidly did my Indians weave contentment

from strands of fire and shelter, food and drink and drying clothes. Coolness stole down from the North on the heels of twilight, and the tea and trout were welcome to three damp souls, two of whom sat crouched on their haunches till my legs ached for them. Barricades of ale stood about, tethering us to earth. It sat on my guides' spirits, for here was a bad portage. They were silent, and I wished for something to bridge the interracial distance between us. It hurt to have such a splendor of perfection in the setting and to lack the currents of mutual friendliness which alone make perfection vital. Suddenly Stewart, in the lowest voice, directed my attention to a beach across the river. I looked; I saw a boulder move; it walked a yard or so, became a bear. It was a kid bear, nosing about. My incorrigible hunters rose for a canoe, but he heard and disappeared. However, he bridged the distance, and pipes drew us closer.

"I wonder," said Stewart, "where is the long-distance runner now."

"A race on?" I inquired. "I had n't heard of it."

"I had n't, either," said he, as if the conversation were making sense. But in general we understood each other well. Only Antoine said no word.

Before a fire which one could almost take to

one's bosom, being small, yet very efficacious, we dried out. And then they set off down the portage to find the destination for the accursed ale, while I prowled along the river to spy out the land. "Every spirit builds itself a house," says Emerson, "and beyond its house a world; and beyond its world a heaven." But here were all three, or parts of all three, and as I picked my way beneath the heavy spruce, over great boulders and beside the river which spoke with a deep and rushing voice, I was brought into as perfect a contentment as can come to us of the ascending way.

I approached the first big pool as it was night. The moon rose over the ridge opposing and gave a difference to everything. Vapor curled from the breathing water. Pointed firs rose in a black wall across the way; and a silence, which the distant rapids in no wise disturbed, opened the door to thoughts from afar. I found the portage back to the camp, and twice was terrified to goose-flesh by leaping rabbits, which sounded like bears projecting themselves upon me from the bush. The fire, the smoking men, seemed very cozy in so spacious a setting.

One more picture. They had gone to bed; I could not go yet. I strolled down to the water's edge. Before the river flowed into the first cascade it rested in a pool, and now that pool was a

mirror for the birch-trees, the sky, the dim cliff, and one straight reddish trunk of an old pine across the stream. A stillness, as of a great waiting, surrounded me. I stood, glad for its perfect beauty, glad, too, that I was such a bundle of unfinished ends and that there would be a morrow; when down from the luminous north came a distant, single cry from some wild throat, and my nerves crinkled with the ancestral thrill. It was a lone wolf howling.

We woke to the ale. The boys had discovered nobody. We must tump it further. By this time my mind had formed a perfect picture of the recipient—a financial roughneck, one of those directors with dewlaps, whose idea of a time in the woods is to sit in front of a tent with a flask; the kind who would have made Eden look like a beer-garden in a week. He would smell like a saloon. Yet I was using him as a ladder, I reminded myself, to look over the wall into paradise. It was scarcely fair to kick him in the stomach when I got to the top. We conferred. We decided to wait half a day. Meanwhile the boys would jump into the business of giving me a good time. This suited perfectly. They jumped.

The Ojibway moves in epigrams. I have never seen a people use such economy of action. All preparation seems interior; the act is the perfect

flower of thought. The thought was always veiled for me. I wished for a Rodin who could read the limbs. Had Rodin sculptured the Indian he would have shown him only half emerged from his native rock. The few men I came to know were all marked by the stillness of trees, the simplicity of water, and its strength, the shyness of the wild, and its dark reserves; also by its humors. The brand of aloofness was on them.

Stewart and Nanni set about showing me the varieties of religious experience known as fishing. We hovered at the top brink of rapids while I cast into their deceptive brightness. They pointed out the right rocks to perch on. I climbed along one whole cliff, clutching a ledge about two inches wide, with a white death foaming below me. Then they said it was too bright to catch anything with flies and I must use bait. So Nanni groped around among some stones and caught a cockatush, a bull-headed minnow, *in his hands*, itself a triumph of digital dexterity comparable to playing Chopin. I was ashamed at first to fish with this lure, for trout cannot withstand it, and you feel as if you 'd clubbed a little girl over the head to get her stick of candy. But one soothes oneself by calling it the Nipigon fly, and as there are millions of brook-trout, gray trout, black trout and other-colored trout waiting in Lake Nipigon

and Lake Superior to have a turn at these pools, I suppose it is a harmless if lower variation of the sport.

And now they launched the canoe in Robertson's Pool and worked me up by the side of the flowing caldron, and I cast into the inviting curve of green where the white disturbance ceased. Down the minnow sank, down and down, and suddenly a fish gave the electric signal, a gigantic tug, as if he 'd said, "Come on down here, you."

"I 'm very comfortable here," I signaled back. "Suppose you come up."

"Nothing doin'," he jerked. "If you won't come, I 'm off."

And he started. Now this was fun. The boys must keep the canoe just so, or we 'd be swept down. I was as good as alone. The pool was big enough, in fact would make a pleasant aquarium for sea-horses, so that there was no danger. I let him go, and go.

"Changed your mind yet?" I signaled.

"Nope," and he went some more. But trout are not reliable, and all at once this one started back. There was no time to reel. I pulled the line in hand over hand, ignominiously; but I didn't want to miss any of his remarks.

"Comin'?" he snapped.

"I have n't a change of clothes."

Then he began to threaten me. "I 'll lead you



Photograph by H. Armstrong Roberts

"CURTAIN"

a dog's life," he jerked. "What is this, anyway?"

"This is life," I said. And it was, life condensed and running over. I was living like a flame, poised beside the brilliant rapid with the sun and forest, the motion and music of it all making a rapturous setting for that spot, the *one* spot where the line cut the green water.

"Aw, *no*, you don't," he slapped out. But there was no hope for him against an antagonist in such spirits as I, and finally in he came, swimming to the net without remonstrance. The school-boys of Rhodes who played tag about their Colossus had nothing like the respect for him that I had for my fish. He wasn't big as Nipigon trout run, only about four pounds and a half. Yet he had drawn me, with a strength beyond the strength of a coach and four, into an enchanted region beyond thought. It is for that the fisherman thanks his fish.

It is for that, also, that a man takes guides, takes even ale. The Indian is the surest master of his land, and deserves the cordial reception and much care for lending you of his mastery. Yet he is treated often like a human door-mat. In the afternoon my boys tumped that weary ale to the far end of the portage, box after box of it, and delivered it to the thirsty millionaire, who was emerging, with retinue, from the south.

"Did he give you something?" I asked Stewart, later.

"No, sir," said Stewart, softly.

"Did he thank you?"

"No, sir," quietly; then he added, still quietly. "Sometimes there'll come one like that. You can guide for him, run around, catch him cockatush and fish, and he'll leave you without even saying good-by. Why is it?"

He was pride speaking. I do not say that these men prefer courtesy to cash, for they cannot live on fine words any better than poets can pay their bills with posthumous royalties. But they are a sensitive people, and very just. Read those two illuminating chapters on the Ojibway by Stewart Edward White in "The Forest," and you will find a sympathetic portrayal of his character by a man who writes carefully and from experience. Here is just one paragraph, not only as true as rock but also firm, fine prose:

For the proper man the Ojibway takes a great pride in his woodcraft, the neatness of his camps, the savory quality of his cookery, the expedition of his travel, the size of his packs, the patience of his endurance. On the other hand he can be as sullen, inefficient, stupid and vindictive as any man of any race on earth. I suppose the faculty of getting along with men is largely inherent. Certainly it is blended of many subtleties. To be friendly, to retain respect; to praise, to preserve

authority; to direct and yet to leave detail; to exact what is due, and yet to deserve it—these be the qualities of a leader and cannot be taught.

Nobody, not even Thoreau, has stated the situation more succinctly than that; and "The Forest" is a collection of essays of like vigor and truth, splashed with humor and set in an atmosphere of poetry, a life-giving book to own.

The ale taken from their backs, my guides were positively buoyant. We camped below the long portage, on an island; and on the morrow, not being Cræsus, I had to give orders to continue down the stream. We passed Split Rock, its great boulders covered with orange and canary-colored fungus, passed Cameron Falls, now harnessed, passed a long carry, and Camp Alexander, where a romance lurks for novelists, and so out on Lake Helen and the Canadian Pacific camp once more.

Man can ask nothing further of nature than this river of the Nipigon. The rest must come from himself. The wildness and purity of its source, the joyousness and beauty of its career, the majesty of its resting-place, are all superlative. If a man's dream lie in such a direction, there he can know the peace of an aspiration made fact, with just enough beyond to prevent the fact from turning bitter. I was aware when I paid off An-

toine and Stewart how ridiculous my words and money were. I had been king, and must belittle it with tips. Yet a shy smile on Nanni's face, a quiet remark from Stewart, did bless the moment with a little brotherhood, and I was strangely happy as I watched them fade along the dusky trail and disappear among the trees.

CHAPTER XIII

AN INTERLUDE STILL MORE PRIVATE

CLEANLINESS runs circles around godliness in the woods, I think.

One epoch of my life had now been finished, and I wanted to round it with a bath, a real bath, a Finn bath. So I sped to Fort William, where it costs a quarter on a Saturday night to know an exhilaration of the gods, and this not on mead or whisky, but on hot water. I had heard of this social institution of the Finns, and I wanted to find out.

At first I had my doubts. The house, from the outside, was as dark as a den of thieves, and while robbers could accomplish nothing on me, yet robbery takes time. But I went in, was handed a towel and motioned toward the undressing chamber. I told you it was social. A half-dozen men, clothed only in their opinions, were conversing, but whether on Sibelius or cheese I could not know. They were glowing and picturesque, these men from far-away Finland, and I wish that the people who shudder with the conventional horror at the nude could have seen the character

in their bodies. A man's body ought to be his character made flesh. If some of our law-mongers and divines could only be visible below the chin, the quality of their ministrations would be better understood.

It was but a step to the stewing-room, where one sat in a steamy gallery long enough to realize where Heraclitus got his notions. All Indians once used to practise this form of ablution. Even now the Indian is clean in the woods. The guides always washed their hands before cooking, and I broke bread many a time with these pagans with far greater satisfaction than I partook of the meals rendered me in French Canada amid the crucifixes and cockroaches. It is the fashion to call the Indians foul, and Heaven knows they often are, near civilization. The little fairy in their homes is not soap. But I have never seen Indian children with rings of meals on their faces so that you could tell their growth like a tree, as I have seen in factory towns. And if one transfer a white family to the woods without the faucets and facilities of home, it becomes rather bedraggled in three days. What, then, of three months, or thirty years?

I moved to the next room. Here, if you were a habitué of the house, you picked out your scrubbing-brush from the collection and went to it like a St. Anthony. But I contented myself

with a shower; none of your languid, lukewarm showers, but a playful stabbing of Lake Superior ice. And after that the towel.

I should be ashamed so to celebrate the flesh if I did not know how it throws back the spirit on itself that there is no getting away from its influence. I had entered that place a cindery mortal. I left it a god. I felt like a knight who would go tilting with the stars and wrest their brilliance from them. There was only one cloud on the whole of heaven, my accumulation of clothes which I desired to treat to a laundering, too. Yet it was Saturday night, and I wanted to leave town by Monday noon. This was a problem, which I decided to hand over to some Chinaman to solve. I inquired for the nearest Chinese laundry.

A shop two or three doors this side of the outpost of the Celestial Empire was a banana-candy-peanut stand, where a small victrola was jogging out the most naïvely cheerful tunelet that ever sped the heel, and I must needs listen, for it hit my fancy. It put a toy bravado in the blood. I would tilt with the stars yet, as soon as I got rid of this accursed laundry. So I made on and passed in. The black-haired launderer did not pause to welcome me. The place smelled of bird's-nest soup.

"I'll come for them Monday," I said, bravely.

"Thursday," said the oppressive Chink.

"Monday," I said; "I must have them Monday."

"Thursday much," said he, pointing to an undoubtedly huge heap of garments.

I looked at his Confucian countenance. It looked unbudgeable. "If I can't move him I won't have much luck with the stars," I thought. But I was too clean to be gloomy. I would tilt in heaven yet. Laughter should be my stave.

"Hang Lung," said I, "if I make you laugh, will you wash them for me?"

He looked at me. It was the first time in his life such a proposition had come to ear. Doubtless he thought I was mad. I was n't, though, only happy, and I had an idea.

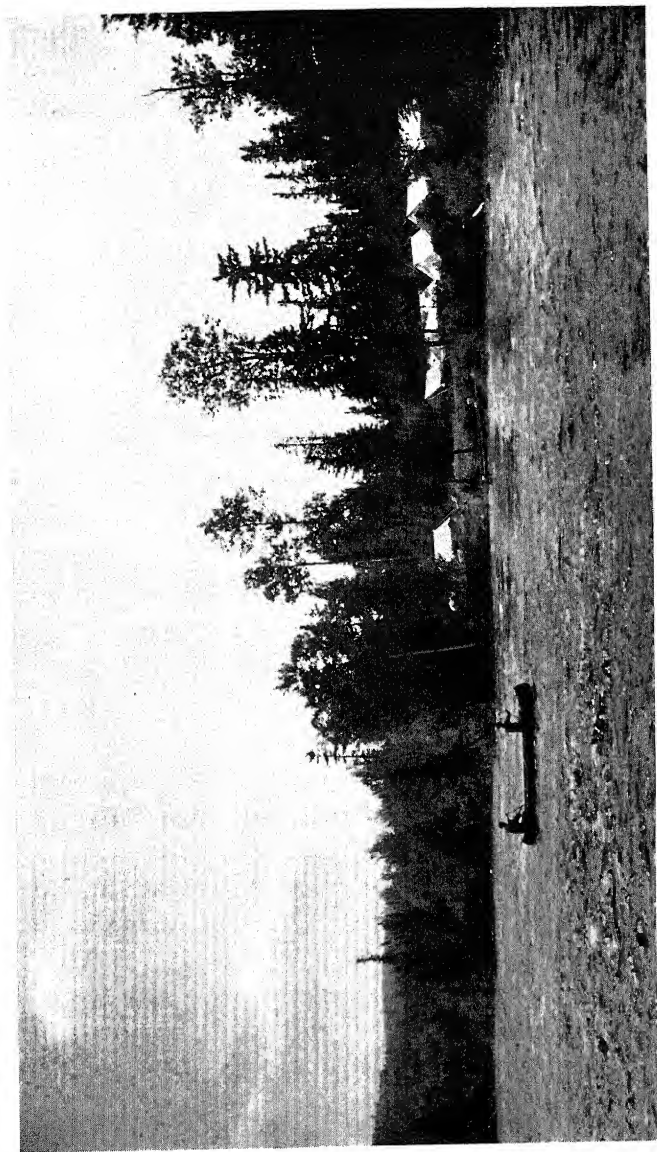
"Will you?" I said.

"I work all the same," he said, without the suspicion of a smile.

"That 's a bargain, then," I said, and, leaving my parcel on the counter, went back down the street three doors. The banana-candy-peanut merchant was selling some of that sensational orangeade, and I waited. Then, "I want to rent your victrola," I said.

"All right," he replied; "ten dollars a month, without the records."

"I 'll take it," I said, "for five minutes with one record."



Courtesy of Canadian National Railways

PINE PORTAGE, NIPIGON RIVER

He looked at me with that same look of sudden scrutiny the Chink had given me.

"Tilting in heaven will be harder than this," I said to myself.

Finally I arranged the sale and carried the little instrument and put it on Hang Lung's counter, though he spared only one small glance; and then I played him the record I had heard, that naïvely cheerful tunelet, "Hi Lee Hi Lo," which is a tune about China-land and a contagion that the tune caused there. He listened. Nobody could help listening. I saw his iron slow up and stop. But there was no twitching of the lip, no passing of the clay-like cloud from his yellow countenance. The tune jiggled to its spontaneous end; but no laugh. For an instant I knew I was an awful fool, forever sticking my finger into some race or other that I did not understand. Who was I to break my spear against the stars? He took up his iron. I took up the victrola, started to take up my clothes.

"I do them," he said solemnly.

"Will you?" I said, dumfounded. "By Monday noon?"

He grunted. Then he bent to work. He had lost a minute. Shades of Ting Lao! What would Confucius say? I went out on the street and shook a fist at Mars. "You next, old boy," I said, and laughed aloud. I was drunk, still drunk—on hot water.

CHAPTER XIV

FRENCH RIVER AND THE TRUSTEE OF HAPPINESS

REACTION came. Reactions always come, and the man who does n't make allowance for them is a novice at life. But this time they all came at once. I knew that writers had their off days; I had guessed that readers and waitresses had. But I 'd not suspected it of Providence until I had embarked on the next stage of my journey.

I now know that it was n't Providence. It never is, which is almost equally exasperating. My distress came from trying to do what I thought I should. I, located there on the far shores of Lake Superior, ensconced in opportunity, lapped in beauty and the bush, happened to read that they were going to have a historical celebration at the Sault. Now this was sheer nuisance. History is interesting enough if you know it personally. It must be thrilling to make. But to observe it, to undergo history from a grand stand, is an arid amusement compared with taming the wilderness to one's purpose or stalking the delights of Lake Superior. The Stewarts and

Miss Black and I were having tea up the Kaministiquia River when my eye fell on the news. Mr. Stewart had just suggested that we all go off on his launch for several days and explore the lake.

"I suppose I've got to attend that celebration," I moaned.

"But why?" said Mrs. Stewart.

"My sense of penance demands it," I said. "I've had weeks of fun. One pleasure has led to the next incessantly. This is the sort of thing a man with Puritan ancestry always pays for some time, and now seems to be the time. Besides, here's a chance to take in three centuryfuls of history at a gulp, already canned."

"It will be very interesting," said Miss Black, severely but rightly. "And our trip can wait. When does their Discovery Week begin?"

"Right off, apparently," said I.

The newspaper was a little torn around the date, and I forgot it anyway, and the *Assiniboia* was sailing, and it was this combination of mischances that landed me in the Canadian Sault three days ahead of time. I shook hands with Captain McCannel with a sinking heart; I arrived at their best hotel with a sunken one. I let myself be led automatically to a room. Stamping on the insectivora with one foot, I called back the bell-hop.

"Has the show begun yet?" I asked.

"What show?"

"Your confounded history week."

"That does n't begin till Saturday."

"Saturday? Ye gods!"

"Is that all, sir?"

"Not quite," said I. "Bring me the timetable."

"The what, sir?"

"The train schedule," I roared in a frustrated rage. It was bad enough to be immolated, but to immolate oneself and for nothing was worse. I suppose that bell-hop harbors an erroneous estimate of me to this day. And as for the management, I have yet to inquire their opinion. Doubtless they were astonished to see me departing, five minutes later, wreathed in smiles. I had discovered something. I had discovered that the Canadian Pacific bungalow camp at French River was only two hundred miles away. What were two hundred miles for the satisfaction of retaking to the woods! Was an arriving at midnight to stand in my way? Remembering my arrival at Nipigon camp, I took the precaution of wiring. When I descended, the host of the camp was on the platform to meet me. I saw the river shining like gun-metal from below. I smelled the softness of pines in the air. On the summit of a hill shone a bungalow light. A cheery greeting from

Mr. Snyder made me doubly at home. I blessed the C. P. R. as never before.

"It's good of you to be undaunted by the hour," I said.

"Oh, I was a newspaper man. Besides, one is daunted by nothing in this air."

"By which remark I see that you are a good hotel man," I ventured, with a laugh.

"Don't call me that," and he returned the laugh. "I'm only a trustee of people's happiness."

"A trustee of happiness! I like that."

"You see," he said, with the zest of a man new at a game, "a great many people drudge for a living. This means that their vacation is the bright spot of their lives. They spend half the year looking forward to it, the other half looking back. It ought to be just the right one that they take, but so few know where to find it. This has been a dream of mine, this trusteeship. I adjust the person to the pleasure."

"An interesting job," I said. "Do you teach them to enjoy as well? People are applying business methods to pleasure now. They are trying mass production of it. The hour is not only crowded; it is stuffed. They try to work at happiness. But I think that they should let happiness work on them."

Doubtless we should have reached a conclusion that would have changed humanity's prospects, had we not arrived at the summit of the hill considerably out of breath. The big living-room was brilliantly lighted, and I saw several men going over fishing-tackle and discussing flies. "Mercy!" thought I, "here is enthusiasm, indeed!" It was nearly one of the morning.

"Are you tired?" asked Mr. Snyder. Remembering the air, I said it was impossible.

"How would you like to go for some of the best bass-fishing in the world?"

It sounded more pleasant than plausible, I said.

"Fine!" cried the trustee. "And there 's just room for one more in the party. You leave in about forty minutes."

"To-night?" I exclaimed.

"This morning," said the purveyor of pleasure, beginning to introduce me to the fishermen. Some were counting worms, which they had ordered down from a fashionable grocery in Toronto. Some were discussing the edibility of fishes. Others were adding sweaters to their persons. They looked so merry and good-natured, though strangers all, that I cast bed to the winds and threw in my lot. And thus it was that I came to have a day of sport unlike all that ever went before. Eight guides filed out of the kitchen

with food. We rambled down to the train, alighted at a station, which shall be nameless at our host's request, and sat down to wait for dawn. The moon that I had seen born at Long Lac, come to age on Lake Nipigon, mature into rotundity down the river, was in its aged quarter and diffused a bland light from behind a mackerel sky, which Eyler, a young Clevelander, said was a good omen for fishing.

The Associated Eight, as we called ourselves, were out for a time of it. We had different businesses, different countries, differing views on politics, religion, and the length of time to boil coffee. Yet we had the sense to be serene. We were a league of natures, bent on a selfish pleasure. Yet we achieved concord. Not a soul jangled during a long day. Perhaps this was because we were enveloped in a cloud of beauty which made our ordinary littleness invisible. At any rate, like Æneas in his cloud, we traveled far. Even the guides, quiet-voiced and easy of motion, shared the serenity. But this anticipates.

We had been sitting in the dark, when the operator came from his room, saying in a voice of restrained emotion: "Are any of you Americans? Then, gentlemen, this news has just gone through. President Harding is dead."

How strange it seemed to be inclosed in a path-

less wilderness and to have this news flashed from the obscure air. It brought pictures of Washington, of the White House, of the man who had worn himself out for our good. Our imaginations were filled by the majesty of the office which death had so dramatically illuminated. The power of a President can be the greatest single influence on earth. Coupled with the power of our sister-government overseas, who is so wise and just, we can police the world to the very doors of the millennium. President Wilson saw this. Perhaps the new President will put it through. This was the thought that echoed around our room as we waited for the dawn.

When the scales of the mackerel sky turned salmon-colored, the Indians took up the canoes and led us up ledge and down ravine to a lake, so narrow and crooked, so broken into passages and bays, that I now saw how the concourse was to be accommodated. We rigged our rods, chose canoe-fellows, and were paddled off into the morning. Eyler and I had a quick and conscientious breed named Frank, a man with a dual mind, the shallow part of it sufficing for guiding, the rest being a reservoir of contemplation from which we fished him occasionally with a question. Silence is of course as various as speech, and Indian silence is a fertile atmosphere in which strange, forgotten clouds of legend, wood-lore,



Photograph by Edith S Watson

A FAMOUS HIGHWAY: FRENCH RIVER

fancy, and the data of past observations float. I wish I knew Frank's last name, for in this region he would be the one to recommend.

We had not been gone twenty minutes before Eyler's rod bent double, and the fight was on. It is a mistake to think that all the big fish live in literature. To be sure, in that favorable medium even the smallest fish reach enormous weights, but now we had one in real life. Eyler was cool as a cellar, playing his fish like those old sporting kings who kept their people half-way between discontent and revolution. I was sitting lost in an unscientific admiration when a bass struck my line and drew my attention. He was an athletic fish, jumping sometimes in unison with Eyler's, sometimes taking a few extra syncopated leaps. The duet kept Frank busy maintaining rights of way. But my bass had another engagement, and he kept it, like an upright fish; so I had an opportunity to observe Eyler land a three-pounder without being diverted by the task of hauling in my five-pound bass. In a short while Eyler had caught a few more fish, and we went ashore for breakfast.

That meal on the rocks, with a deer wading around on the opposite shore, browsing and looking at us; that morning of gliding on and on into the labyrinthine channels; that dinner, and siesta, and talk, and swim; and the exquisite evening

sinking into night will remain an immaculate pleasure in the memories of the Associated Eight. The gods lying on the lawns of Olympus could have known no larger a serenity than blessed us, as we reclined about the supper fire and reviewed the day.

The lake itself contributed to this, being a bit of old Japan gone wild. The granite, probably burned by the voyageurs in another age, had yet none of the desolated look of a brûlée and supported dwarf spruce and firs and whole lawns of moss, and one was never far from the picturesque shore, which was ever varying. Porcupines chattered from the trees, red deer bespoke the lily-pads, and sign of otter and beaver revealed what might be seen at night. And every little while one caught a bass. When you go to the camp at French River, request the Trustee of Happiness to hunt you Frank and send you to this lake.

The best, as always, lay in the human association, and I had been very lucky in my pal for the day, Eyler. Every interesting salesman who presents himself to me does his genus a favor, for I have a lurking prejudice of the race. Eyler had been born with humor, enthusiasm, and an uncommon generosity of mind. More than once on the trip some wise crack of his had adjudicated a discussion harmoniously. The controversy as

to which fish were edible again arose. "That is easy to settle, gentlemen," he had said. "The non-edible fish are those still in the water." And the laugh cleared the sky. Again, at midnight, there was a slight difference of opinion as to the proper method of stopping the train. "Team-work," suggested Eyler, "is the basis of all success. I shall make a birch-bark torch, Ruecke here will light it, Longstreth will stand with a spare, the rest of you will kneel in supplication, and if that doesn't work, the guides shall cast themselves beneath the wheels. Take your positions." That man will have what he wants in this world, but he will take it so graciously that nobody can object.

"How was the fishing?" asked the Trustee, next day.

"Monstrous," I said; "I feel like a murderer."

"Then you are in the mood to go out for muskallunge," he affirmed; but I declined fishing, declined a picnic up-river; and while they were setting out in a rumpus of enjoyment, I hunted out Eyler, saying:

"Do you know anything about this country?"

"Not much."

"That's fine. Will you come with me?"

"Where?"

"I haven't an idea. We'll set out and fetch up where the fates concede."

"That suits me," he replied, and we hunted up some lunch.

"Where are you going?" asked the boat-boy.

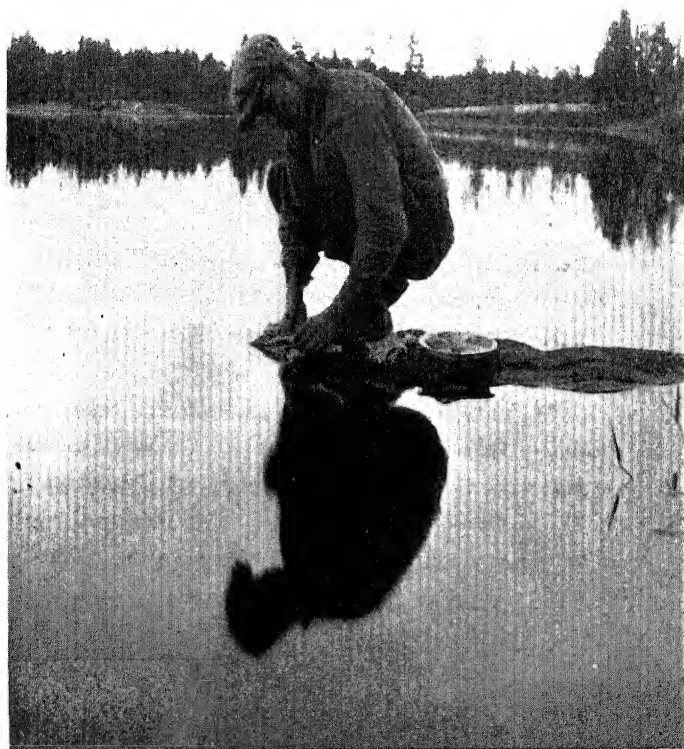
"Nowhere especially."

That horrified him. But when he noticed that we were taking no fishing-tackle he could not get over it. "Well, all I say is, don't you two go over the falls," he remarked.

"Are there falls?" We asked together.

There were, indeed, not high but foaming, about a mile down river. The mile was as lovely a stretch of wilderness as morning sun ever lighted. The river had cut the living granite cleanly, and moss and evergreen relieved its sternness. All was of that unstudied neatness which is Nature's secret. We heard the falls in sufficient time to carry around them, though I am told it is the custom for at least one boat-load to go over every year.

We idled and thought of the historic procession which this river had once seen. Five years before the Pilgrims stood on their naked rock, Champlain had patronized this watercourse. While the English were still trying for a toe-hold on the coast of America, the voyageurs, ascending the Ottawa, taking the left-hand turn at the Nipissing, and cutting back to Georgian Bay by the channel we were on, had explored the interior of



Photograph by Edith S. Watson

A KEEPER OF THE BLUE

the continent as far as Michigan. Then came the Jesuits, who forsook the safety of the cloister for the saving graces of the converting field, and, postponing comfort till the grave, sought to transfer the inhabitants from the clutches of Manitou to the keeping of the True God, never realizing how securely the world rested in the everlasting arms. We looked at the same granite bluffs on which the tired and wistful eyes of those undaunted fathers had once gazed, and ours were better for the thought of them.

We paddled up-stream and went to the Pickerel River—for all this land is netted with waterways—returning through Pickerel Pass near sunset. It is a toy cañon, warranted complete, tricked out with tiny turreted walls, groves of small evergreen, a trickling stream. We could see the rock-bass swimming about, a miniature species which the fairies catch. This place was created for children's picnics, only at sunset, please, silence is requested. It was dark when we reached our dock and the boat-boy.

"I thought you was drowned," he said.

"You'd oughta 've told us where you were going," said the chef, "and I'd 've give you more to eat."

"Had you only let me know," said the Trustee, "I could have spared one of the guides."

"What an awful trip!" I heard one of the ladies exclaim. "And they were lost in the dark!"

"There 's no telling," began her friend, but Eyler and I sneaked off to our bungalows, quite ashamed of having been caught so happy in such an incorrect, unpremeditated way.

Yet he dared to call across to me under cover of the dark, "Bully day, was n't it?"

"Ssshh!" said I. "Glorious."

It was Mrs. Trustee who completed the charm of the French River camp. Both host and hostess had large dreams for their domain, planning outlying camps and a sensible usage of the wilderness. They made one feel very much at home.

The night drew near when I must dog the heels of history. The train left at two. I said good night to all, piled some wood in the great fireplace, gathered me meat and drink from the larder, found a book, and began to stand off sleep on his own ground. It was a siege perilous, before that fire. But one thing will always keep me awake, the map of Canada. I got it out, and planned. There, about Lake Superior, lay a hundred thousand square miles that lured to exploration. Rivers ran hither and thither, like startled deer, collecting in herds of lakes for a moment's breathing, only to scatter again over the landscape. "If the earth is the Lord's foot-stool,"

thought I, "then His feet must be pretty damp."

And when the map failed me, there remained the fire, and I carried my musings to it. "O Canada, Canada, you lucky land," I thought, "you have all the blessings that the Mighty Mother can bestow, gold and grain and iron, fish and wood, great spaces, beauty, youth. Your people are ambitious, decent, strong, fundamentally honest, and fairly wise. May you continue to be the proving-ground for our race, the sanctuary for those who would keep faith with man's most glorious traditions, the home of those laws on which rests human progress. Then from you shall issue that character which guarantees the debt of godship in us."

The whistle of the train sounded from across the waste.

CHAPTER XV

THEIR DISCOVERY WEEK—AND MINE

MY first discovery, on arriving at Sault Ste. Marie the next morning, was that Etienne Brûle had anticipated me by just three hundred years, thus having something of a start. But I resolved to make it up. I hired a taxi, and requesting the driver to keep as far from the hotels as possible, set out to find a lodging for the night. Purchasing a history of the place, I read, while being driven along the bunting-decked thoroughfares, the biography of Brûle.

He turned out to be a very interesting man, an intrepid adventurer who knew the land, or rather the water, from Lake Superior to Chesapeake Bay. He was a great business-getter for the king of France, who did not appreciate him, and was map-drawer to Samuel Champlain. Champlain, however, hid his Brûle under a bushel. My opinion of Champlain goes down.

When Brûle came to Pawiting, as this rendezvous of the Ojibways was called, there were seven huts on the Canadian side of the rapids, four on the American, making something of a community

in those days. Annual feasts were held, and painted warriors stalked the street. I looked up from my book to note the change. Now, it was the women who were painted instead of the warriors, and the decorations that the ladies could not accommodate had been transferred to the buildings. Gaiety prevailed. Brûle had evidently started something. Also, I gleaned from the taxi-driver, a soldiers' reunion was in progress. I was taken to a rooming headquarters, where private housekeepers had arranged to take care of the overflow, and it came about that I overflowed into a very lovely home. This was my second discovery. From now on I began to appreciate the Sault.

Sight-seeing comes naturally to some people, like marriage. They go at it without practice and profess to enjoy it, though without explaining why. But I must admit to requiring a strong personal interest before going to equal lengths. This interest was provided by my third discovery. I had hunted up the rooms of the Board of Trade to procure some additional data, for I had found that the amount of history in the town was astounding. The Indians, the French, the Jesuits, the explorers, the voyageurs, coureurs de bois, gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company, the North-West Company the War of 1812, the Red River Expedition, and only the historian knows

how many other companies and expeditions had come to this town. And no sooner were they here than they felt called upon to do something remarkable, something worthy of commemoration and a tablet. I saw that my historical ignorance would harry me fruitlessly from place to place unless I had a counselor. And so I discovered Mr. W. E. Wolfe, the secretary. To this genial man, whose kindness and uninterrupted zeal directed my manœuvres during the next days, I owe my personal pleasure in events and in the Sault, which, if you can come to know it, is a very remarkable place. They were days of crowded interest. Colonel C. H. Jones had generated the populace into presenting a whirlwind program with nicety and despatch. Somewhere at every moment soldiers were celebrating, mock battles raging, Indians pageanting, veils falling from monuments, and speeches rising from eloquent historians. There was music and feasting and dancing in the street. And when I began to beg for a respite, Wolfe motored me out to Gros Cap of an early morning just to show me that the Sault is the key and the beginning of the real Lake Superior country.

A twenty-minute climb showed shallow Whitefish Bay, a gray frontispiece to the deep green beyond. A summer peace rode the waters, which I found hard to believe are among those most

dreaded in the world by navigators, because of the droves of shoals. To the north I saw the ranges where the genius of Mr. F. H. Clergue, the man who made the Sault, insisted that minerals should be found until they were found. Mr. Wolfe told me about this man on the way back to the locks. It was a story of honest promotion that o'erleaped itself, a fascinating tale of how a man with much vision, much persuasive charm, in less than half a lifetime had created an industrial city in the wilds, erecting the largest steel-mills in Canada, producing pulp and power and a place to live in the heart of a game country.

We reached the locks in time to witness the pageant of the landing of Brûle and his comrade Grenolle. A monument was unveiled to the explorer. Then we examined a restoration of the miniature canal-lock through which the long-boats of the Hudson's Bay Company were floated. Here an appropriate cairn was unveiled by Mr. Coyne, the historian, an urbane gentleman with whom I lunched at the kind thought of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Ross in their home by the locks. Here was unexpected delight. I believe there is a reward offered by the Bible to people who entertain the stranger within their gates. I hope the Ross family receive it in full.

Thence we tottered to the Snaargate Trench, a replica in part of that famous system on the

slopes of Vimy. We were conducted through it by Lieutenant Venn, a fine-looking man, whom it is a wonder that milord Death, who covets the able and the handsome, should have spared. He directed our attention to the studied exactness of the scene. It was conscientious, Heaven knows. Corpses hung on the barbed-wire entanglements inviting the crows; sharp-shooters fought the air with a great din; gas-cylinders and bomb-piles, periscopes and rats, complicated the passage; dressing-stations stunk of ether; and the Lieutenant explained rapidly and clearly the mortars, stroke-guns, and other apparatus for simplifying slaughter. Here was war in all its suicidal perfection. The effect had been less if this superb soldier had not put the query plainly: Are we intelligent, or are we not? Are we automata of the senses, or seedlings of the spirit? Of course he didn't put it in words; he was too highly trained a soldier for that. But there it was written in his magnificent physique, his clear brain, his modest and reasonable soul. If we have brains, which is a belief that clings, then let understanding and not gunpowder control our relations. At least, that was the fancy which flashed into my mind as worth trying when I perceived that one step nearer to the complete equipment would annihilate all the Venns of the world at a blast.



Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

HIAWATHA

It was a serene contrast to walk over to St. Mary's River where the Indians were to deliver "Hiawatha" in Ojibway, and see an island rimmed with canoes, smoke before the wigwam of Nokomis, and the young brave learning the bow and arrow. The story that thrilled me as a child inside a school's walls now held me with a charmed delight. Here I was actually in the land of the Ojibways. There at the head of the rapids was the Shining Big Sea Water. I saw the daughter of the Moon, Nokomis, a wrinkled squaw, and the boy a broad-cheeked brave. The lines that Nawadaha had whispered to Longfellow really did sound like an inspiration of the wind and water. If any tongue ever babbled, it is the Ojibway's. His speech is nature made intelligible.

Mr. L. O. Armstrong, who has fostered this work, did well to plan that lane of limpidness between us and the redskins intent on their legend. It made the right break between peanut-shells and poetry and became a spiritual moat. Hiawatha acted simply, learned to dance and sing, learned, easily enough, to woo, and with remarkable celerity turned into the sufferer for his race. It was so real, so devoid of the usual makeshifts of stage illusion, that one could feel the beauty and tragedy of the story simply, too. What the Indians must have felt, to whom tradition is so sweet, we

cannot know. They entertained us around their supper fires, did Chibiabos, the sweet singer, and Shawano, who was *Hiawatha*, but their hearts were not to be interviewed. I was glad to find from Mr. Armstrong, who has known the Ojibways for thirty years, and who suffers neither from illusion nor sentimentality about them, that their faults are the faults of children, their excellences those of strong and simple men. It is tragedy indeed that in so large a world there is so small a place for them, and that so insecure.

The climactic spectacle of Discovery Week was the night attack by Canadian troops who had been overseas, on an intrenched position of the Germans. The Government coöperated to make this the most astonishing thing of the sort ever staged, and I heard one of the participants say, "This bloody thing 's too right to be good."

The attack commenced in utter darkness with a working-party busy in No-Man's-Land consolidating some newly captured trenches. A star-shell disclosed them, and the Huns set about wiping them out. Instantly the field was lit up as for a soirée in Hades; the artillery laid down a barrage which should have exterminated even the grasshoppers; and then the Canadians went over the top. Tanks trod on barbed wire; troops poured forward, fell, were borne off, while reinforcements arrived and pressed on under an in-

creasing fire of everything that had ever been invented to explode. It was stunning, magnificent, and extraordinarily real. In fact a woman next to me said, "If real war is anything like as awful as this it ought to be stopped." But in that intoxication of blast and rumble, flare and burst of light, there was no stopping. Could they have added a band's cry to the top of the fervor, we should all have enlisted for the conquest of Mars.

Instead we danced. They made a pavement slippery with meal, the band touched the feet of loggers, trappers, and cash grocers to lightness, and Gloom turned down a side street and sucked her fingers. Here all was lightness and spontaneity, that soul of wit. Three hundred years before, the tom-tom had beaten the braves into a frenzy on this very spot, with Brûle looking on. Now he had come again, and the Sault joined hands to make his blithe spirit feel at home. As I was thinking of him a flash of confetti drenched my face, laughter my ears, and I saw the slim girl who had favored me disappearing in the maze. So, like some brave of three hundred years ago, I pursued her, caught her, while the band began anew, and was unanimous at last with the melting, moving carnival.

CHAPTER XVI

ABOARD THE ALGOMA

I HAD arrived at the Sault in the state of de-vitalized apathy which usually ushers me into a strange town. I departed in an astonished rapture on the observation end of a private car. In between I had had a mighty good time.

Songs of sixpence do not interest me very much, and still less statistics in seven figures. But I had not been in the Sault a day before I found myself listening to their estimates and exploits with an almost personal pride. When I came to analyze this feeling, I saw that it was because these citizens injected a rather rollicking atmosphere into their merchandizing. They still were men—this athletic Colonel Jones, who ran the Spanish River concern; this Mr. Jack Ryan, who wouldn't have missed his spring fishing or autumn hunting for a pulp-mill. Such were men of affairs in the morning, of the fields in the afternoon. They could sell twenty million dollars' worth of steel rails to the C. P. R. and then turn round and catch rainbow-trout at the foot of the town streets. They were men before they were

merchants. It was this balance made me glad.

It was quite obvious that Mr. Clergue, after the Lord, had created his Sault in a very favorable location. To the west lay the greatest lake in the world, to the north the greatest wilderness, to the south and east the greatest expanse of capital and consumer on the face of the planet. The Dixie, the Roosevelt, the Trans-Canada Highways formed a perpetual invitation to her gates; and if you didn't care to come by gas, there remained water, air, or steam. Her locks spouted more tonnage than any other in the world, and there were other superlative things which I have forgotten; but one could not forget the situation of the Sault. Some time the humdrum, when not hideous, old houses will yield to something that is appropriate to the gateway of the Sky Blue Water, something that does not affront you when you wind up St. Mary's River. Go east or go west of the Sault, and you are plunged into beauty; go north, and you meet beauty and majesty together. This I was now to be shown by Mr. McCormick, the superintendent of the Sault's personal railroad, to whom, as a parting piece of thoughtfulness, Mr. Wolfe had introduced me.

In Mr. McCormick I was finding that most excellent sort of companion, a man not too hard to kindle, not too laborious to keep alight, a gentleman of medium height and middle age, in whose

bosom burned the very coals of kindness you read about in Scripture. The train had left at nine. At nine-five it had traversed the town and entered her pastures. It was but one step from the rural to the wild, and but one more to the transcendent bush where moose stood in the lakes and the hawks looked arrogantly at us as we rambled by. I thought of the children whose only wilderness consists of those alternate strips of asphalt and tired flowers known as parks.

And then I was swung around a great curve which disclosed a superb bowl of blue air, held by hills of lucid green leading down to the distant splendor of the lake. The man who names stations had christened this one Bellevue infallibly enough, but I forgive him; it didn't matter here. One gazed and gazed into this vortex of loveliness. All the drafts of beauty which one might take from this drinking-horn, as from Thor's, would leave it unexhausted. And the wash of silver, where the lake began, flooded the mind and the imagination without reaching thought. Lake Superior was always doing that. Whether its immensity coming where you expected land, or its color, its majesty of power, or its offering of freedom amid beauty contributed most I cannot say. My heart leaps when I hear the name as when I hear no other, and I rejoice that there is an expanse of such untamable

beauty, of such dangerous and boding splendor on the earth. There lies the very purity of liberty; there can be found the springs of life unstained, and within the reach of those who single-heartedly desire. The train pulled me away, but it was heavier by one glorious vision.

We climbed and climbed between cliffs burned by time to the color of their native redskins. Here and there little clouds started from their sides, upspringing from lakes concealed in green glens. Shadows of clouds moved along in a stately fashion, throwing a robe of royal blue on the forests as they passed; and every valley was illuminated by a river. The train did twenty minutes' worth of travel easily in an hour, which gave us time to look, and while we looked Mr McCormick narrated a series of things to do.

"If I were you," he said, "I'd stick by the train as far as Hawk Junction, where I'll give you an order on a speeder to Michipicoten Harbor where the old Mission was. Or perhaps you'd rather camp at Sand Lake, where the fishing is very fine. Or there is the Montreal River near-by, where I must park the car for a few days. Or perhaps you'd prefer to keep right on to Franz and take the Canadian Pacific along the North Shore, or even east to Missanabie, where the Hudson's Bay post is. And of course you ought to meet Devlin. He's from the States and

lives four miles from Frater. I'll tell the conductor to introduce you, if he's at the station. He's a man to know. Or—"

I stopped him with a gesture of desperation. "It is very clear," I said, "that this is no common carrier. It exists apparently to give fishermen and hunters pleasure. What ore and pulp it carries is done on the side. I notice that the train travels by inspiration rather than the time-table. I would like to do the same. Do you mind if I don't say now at eleven thirty-five of the morning precisely what shall make me most cheerful at four-fifteen of the afternoon?"

"The road is yours to command," he said with a smile.

"But I shall let it command me. I'll get off where it says."

"It is saying, 'Come to lunch,' if I hear aright," said Mr. McCormick, as the waiter appeared.

The more I saw of the Algoma Central the more I wondered at the energy of the will which had driven its course through such a territory. We had climbed fifteen hundred feet. We shifted from side to side of one cañon after another. The climax came at the Montreal River, where Mr. McCormick had the train stopped so that we could feel the very heart-beat of the wilderness. An impetuous spruce-colored stream, flow

ing from a pass, dropped into smoky depths. Walls sculptured by frost and wind harbored firs in their crevices, and on both sides rose mountains, each square mile of which afforded a fund of exploration. What an endless world, and how endlessly beautiful! I thought, as my eyes encountered no limit to the variety of form and color. And suddenly, as the train began to crawl and take it from me, I knew that it could not be taken, that beauty is the undivided surplus of life, and inalienable, and the wealth which time enhances rather than corrupts and which no one can steal.

With my host gone, I undertook an exploration of the train. It was a delight, a sort of moving village. Behind the engine followed a comfortable freight-car or two, which corresponded to the street-corner. From this came gently ribald remarks to the girls at the stations, and herein between stops was conducted the heavier business of administration. Next was the café car, the inn, which assuaged the thirsts and hungers of shantymen, fishermen, Indians, breeds, and the commercial gentry. Then came the village proper, with children playing on the narrow green, old wives knitting and exchanging gossip across the street-aisles, and an apple-boy taking the place of milkman as a ware-monger. The curse of enterprise seemed to be on them no more

than on the train itself. If the world was too much with them, a matter of soap and towel would put that straight. I willingly sacrificed expedition for the musing friendliness of the trip. Not so one of the commercial travelers.

"Ain't this a hell of a road?" he exclaimed to me indignantly.

I differed as gently as I could.

"Why, the only accident that could n't happen on this line is a hot box."

"Then you should applaud them for going so cautiously," I replied. He looked at me as I would have looked at a gnu, and turned his face to the wall.

The next fellow I happened to sit by was a mute inglorious Mark Twain, a shaggy fellow with a humorous eye and a curious mind. "What you doing?" he asked.

"Traveling," said I.

"Business or pleasure?"

"Both in one."

"Then it must be you're one of them tourist fishermen."

"A fisherman, maybe, but hanged if I'm a tourist."

"Finding any?"

"Lots."

"You come to the right place when you come here."

"I never saw so many lakes to the township, or so many fish to the lake."

"You're right," he said. "Sometimes they develop nervous troubles from overcrowding." His face didn't change a muscle.

"How pitiable!" said I, trying to do the same.

"But it makes 'em handsomer."

"How so?" I asked, seeing it was part of the game.

"Shiny, from rubbing ag'in each other so much."

"It's fortunate they're on inland lakes," I said, feeling that it was my turn.

"How so?" he asked, it being his to humor me.

"The light might mislead navigators at night."

"Right," said he, "but they'd learn 'em not to."

"How so?"

"In schools," said he, spitting deftly through a crack beneath the window-sash.

The ball was falling. I could think of no way to keep it going, when I was spared ignominy by having the conductor stop by me and say: "Frater's next, if you want to see Mr. Devlin. Mr. McCormick said you might."

I got off and looked for Mr. Devlin, but he had not come up that day.

"I'll show you the trail if you want to walk

down," said the man at the station. "He 'd be glad to put you up."

It amused me to hear how everybody offered me the Devlin hospitality. It spoke well, though, for a stranger to come among these people and establish himself so high in their estimation in three years that they all wanted me to meet him. But I climbed back on the train. The conductor took a seat beside me, saying: "That 's too bad. But you 'll probably see the airplane at Franz."

"Really!" and my heart gave a definite jump, remembering my flights across primeval Canada. "But it 's a life-work getting permission," I added with a slump.

"Not here. This plane 's flying for the Spanish River Company, and Colonel Jones—he 's a fine man now—would let you up."

I told him of weeks wasted in French Canada.

"I know," he laughed; "I 've read your book on that."

"Inconceivable," I said.

"Which country do you like the better?"

"Can you ask me?" I said. "Other things being equal, a man likes to be comfortable, to live with his mental and spiritual kin. He likes an interest taken in him. But two things he demands: a tendency to liberty, and a scruple in favor of telling the truth. The habitants of French Canada cannot understand the English-

man, and the politicians do not care to. I was lonely among the one and lied to by the others. The educated French Canadians have of course the charm of that cosmopolitan atmosphere which raises any people out of the provincial into the universal. But they are few. Here I find directness, truth, an impulse to progress, and an appreciation, an informing spirit, which mark the Anglo-Saxon at his best. I do not believe in discarding Paris because of discovering London. Different races, different virtues. But here the people like me, do things for me; and here I find wilderness, game, fish, Indian customs, beauty, and understanding, a constructive kind of life, and an outreaching to a degree I never found there. I believe it would be the same with most Americans. I am glad that I have found Ontario."

"One of Ontario's finest sights is right here," he said.

So, at his suggestion, I went to the rear platform, my mind still prickling with the possibilities of things to do. The cañon of the Agawa struck my amazed glance a broadside. Below us lay a curving gulf, at whose bottom shone a silver threadlet of water. It was a river. The green and shaggy flanks of a mountain range opposite lifted up the sunshine; and gazing far, far down the pass I again saw the glitter of Lake Superior.

It released the eye to distance, and I was still soaring over the firs toward it when I heard a voice beside me say, "It 's v-v-very bu-beautiful, is n't it!"

CHAPTER XVII

PACKING WITH A SKY-PILOT

THE voice had issued from a wiry chap of modest proportions and clear-cut features who was dressed in the wise of a Church-of-England man on tour in the bush. His able British way, which always suggests the man of the world, contrasted with his clerical collar and his other-worldly gentleness. There was nothing incongruous in the contrasts, however; rather something assuring. I prefer to be guided spiritually by a man who is as eager to catch salmon as to toll down salvation on my head.

While the train was falling into the valley, I learned that he had been in line for a high post in England when the war had grabbed and gassed him and sent him to the bush to seek wholeness at the same time as he should be purveying holiness to the flocks of this unfeatured desert.

"You must miss marmalade for breakfast and conversation with your tea," I said.

"The latter particularly," he replied, having got over his stammers in warming up about his

Oxford, "for the Indians will not talk, and the others cannot."

"I should think you would get horribly lonely."

"There is no time, really."

"But what do you find to do between Sundays?"

"There 's enough work to cause forgetfulness," he said, smiling, and proceeded to outline the Lethean influences. These included a circuit of more than a hundred miles through a country with more wolf-packs than churches. I was beginning to feel an interest. Here was this man, fairly slight of physique, with the nerve of a pugilist and the ardor of a saint, trapesing this untraveled forest with a pack of hymn-books, and carrying for memories the Oxonian tradition.

"How do you find the Indians as audience?" I asked.

"The best of all," he exclaimed. "Once won, won forever. They attend with regularity, listen devoutly, contribute generously, and cause less trouble than the other races. But it is rather a feat to capture them. I'm on my way now to address my largest congregation at Missanabie."

"I'd dearly like to see an Indian congregation," I ventured.

"Come along, then, if you like. It's something of a trip, but you might find it interesting."

The way he talked, quietly, straightforwardly,

convinced me that here was no slight opportunity. So I repacked my duffle in the train aisle, checked the major portion on to Franz, and where the train stopped before a sign-board reading "Goudreau, the New Gold-Fields," we got off to strike into the wilderness. Goudreau, I discovered, was actually a flourishing vortex of the frontier, with brawls and backbitings and strange, humorous acts of kindness.

"When I consider these people," said the sky-pilot, "set in this tremendous bush, surrounded by the woods and sky, and see how small they are, how they are forever wrangling and snatching, the words that your Emerson put into Nature's mouth come to mind—you remember when she speaks to the tempestuous young man, 'Why so hot, my little sir?' My hardest and my dearest times are in this neck of the woods. I've had some adventures which might seem impossible to our age of super-civilization. Unfortunately my memoirs cannot be published while I am living here, or I should get a bullet in my spine." Whereupon he told me some stories as funny as I ever heard.

"When you concentrate on his meannesses, man does seem the only obstacle to a perfect world," I said. "If only we did not boast so of our intelligence! We deceive ourselves about it, vaunting the lucid mind and practising obtuseness. We

lie guilelessly about our progress while still repeating our pristine crimes. It's like children who deny having seen the pantry, and the cake-crumbs still on their cheeks. But I do believe that the race is growing up."

"So do I, sir. To read history carefully is to be assured of it. There never was so much mercy, acceptance of responsibility, striving for betterment, and longing for a universal good will around the planet as there is to-day."

We had been walking on an old road, the disused route to a village called Nichols, now unmantled. Dusk was closing in as we entered the deserted place. A chemical company had once flourished here, and to emerge from the green seclusion of the woods upon a bare and empty hotel, an uninhabited set of dwellings, and a closed plant with its towering brick chimney gave me a Poe-like thrill. Had Crusoe stumbled on a moldy library, or Columbus found the savages attending a moving-picture show in '92, it could have been scarcely a greater surprise than this ghostly crumbling town to me. It gave one the shivers, too, with its memories instead of movement, and decay for its only distraction.

"It happens to be the geographical center of my field," said the sky-pilot, "and has the advantage of being a cheap shelter."

"It must seem like living in a vacuum, which I, as well as nature, would abhor."

"Well, I 'm never at home," he said with a laugh, showing me into a cottage.

The talking of religion bears the same relation to its practice as the talking about playing scales on the piano bears to their accomplishment. Performance is nine-tenths of the pulpit, just as it is of the pianoforte. The arts may be rooted in theory, but they grow only by practice. Many a time the next day did I long for some of the capon-lined divines of fashionable churches, that they might see religion in action. For it was a day. Early as dawn comes in August, we rose earlier, and as the hours progressed they gave me a singularly comprehensive sample of the life of the Jesuits. Lake after lake did we sweat along under an incandescent sun; portage after portage did we put behind us for the greater glory of God; until I began to wish that evangelization had perished with French supremacy, and that hymnals (for we carried countless pounds of them) had long ago been deemed superfluous to the saving of souls. But my companion, who oftener than not performed these labors by himself, was as cheerful as a congregation dismissed, and, in between our discussions continued from the evening before, related funny stories. His was not

only a strenuous religion but a volatile. My fingers itch to give his name, but they closed on a promise not to.

The mission at Missanabie stands on sloping granite that overlooks Dog Lake. Around it were grouped some Indian cottages and tepees, and already some of the dusky congregation had anticipated our arrival. Before the religious ceremony, I was to witness a judicial encounter, for the duties of this man of God were as versatile as virile, ranging from surgery to suggesting suitable names for children, from salutary advice on dressmaking to the separation of duelists. He was now wanted in a near-by cottage, where a woman, with hair so stringy that it suggested too frequent pullings by her husband, was mopping up the floor. The husband furnished a dark background to the scene.

"Oh, he has just been awful," she exclaimed as the pilot and I entered.

"I received word that you have hurt yourself," said my friend to the man, beginning with the craft of a serpent.

"Not much, sir. It weren't much"; and I could see that he had some sense of his visitor's authority.

"Too much for him to go to work," interpolated the wife.

She was silenced with a nod, and the shepherd

continued softly, "I also have heard that you have broken your promise to me, James."

"How so?" He mumbled like a child.

"Why, by beating your wife. I warned you that you would be fined if you did that again. Were you drunk, James?"

"No, sir."

"You were beating your wife sober, eh?" he said, a glint coming into his dark eyes. "I would n't have thought that of you, James."

"Only a little bit," said James, misinterpreting the gentleness of the shepherd's voice.

"Oh, you bet he was drunk!" came from James's visible conscience.

"And after you beat her, what?"

"I went for a walk."

"Where?"

"Just down the track."

"And that's how you hurt yourself? Did you fall?"

"I stumbled on a tie."

"And fell down the side of the embankment?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you only hurt yourself a little bit?"

"That 's all, sir."

"With all those sharp rocks, too," mused my friend; then, sternly, "You must have been dead drunk, James, and I shall fine you—for the church."

And the man produced the money. Such is the gift of mastery through meekness. Had the pilot raved, he would likely have been shot, for the passions of these people are not merely perfunctory. We progressed to the mission. It was full.

The air of the congregation was devout—and personal. Into the seats were crowded round-eyed Indian girls and aged squaws, young bucks who would be splendid guides, and who were present to take a shot at being religious as one might pot a rabbit; old men whose pagan features spoke louder than their prayers so lately learned. They had all gathered here with much fortitude because they'd been asked by a decent man who was reading the service to them. As he preached they listened, intently. My eye wandered from this young Oxford graduate to his elderly listeners. What was his simple discourse meaning to them? What was he doing? Turning the water of their misty thoughts into some wine of faith? Or diverting their deep if easy appreciation of the Great Spirit into the difficult and shallow channels of controversy? I confess I missed part of the sermon, for my memory had suddenly confronted me with a picture in some nursery-book where the animals had congregated for a like event, and though they had dressed carefully, yet *Brer Rabbit's* ears protruded from his bonnet, *Brer Fox's* muzzle looked suspiciously

cunning despite the fact that he was murmuring Moody and Sankey, and a row of hens in kerchiefs looked ridiculously ill at ease on the top gallery. Whatever their brains were doing behind that mask of intentness, I was sure of two things: that nothing can be lost, and that each seed bears fruit after its kind. This earnest, happy young fellow before them was a sower, indeed, and his energy would not be wasted. Not, especially, on those who had ears to hear. On the last bench but one sat half a dozen local gentlemen, however, who had lent their ears elsewhere. They were under the influence of moonshine.

Now, the ways of alcohol are subtle ways. Why those gentlemen had come to church, or why, having come, they sat so quietly, are queries to which I have no answer. They were quite two thirds drunk. Indeed they must have been held fairly tight in the everlasting arms to be able to stand upright when it came time to sing. At the end of his service, the sky-pilot suggested that if any of the congregation desired to stay and choose some favorite hymns to sing, they were welcome. All stayed, and nearly all chose. In a lull, one of the inebriates rose rather groggily to his feet and called for Thirty-nine. The pilot announced Thirty-nine, and it was sung, sung as if by four and twenty rather unbaked blackbirds, but sung devoutly. Toward the close, between verses, the

groggy gentleman leaned over two or three intervening pals and said to the last in a stage-whisper, "Sing like hell, Bill, while I look up another." It was probably the only extraordinary event of the evening.

I took the night train to Franz, where my duffle was and where the airplane was to be. The pilot went with me to the station.

"I wish I knew more about your work—and you," I said.

"Get in touch, then, with the villains of the country-side," he said smiling. "I'm well known to the bad characters and proud of it, but to the very good I come as a passing zephyr—and am gone." When the train came his lips still smiled, but his eyes had a far-away look, and I knew that, as we parted, he was remembering England.



Photograph by Will Harkness

SHE SPEAKS FOR HERSELF

CHAPTER XVIII

FRANZ THE UNFEVERISH

OUT of the chaos of kings and queens called English history, one monarch and one scene hit my infant fancy with force. This ruler was Bloody Mary, whom I now realize to have been slightly bigoted if not morose, but who then captivated me to a degree only equaled by *Bluebeard*. And the scene which I remembered so poignantly occurred after her reverses on the Continent, when she exclaimed feelingly, "When I die you will find Calais written on my heart."

There was not only spiritual pathos but physiological mystery for me in this. I actually pictured the word scrawled across her quivering organ by the burning point of sorrow. It struck me as quite possible and even fitting. The only thing that baffled me was who would read that inscription, and how.

Well, I still believe that words are written on our hearts, and the more deeply we live the more deeply are they graved. On that tablet lie all the master-words of our destiny in living letters. And, in smaller script, the forgotten deeds and

dreams, persons and places, which took us with a firmer hand than we thought and led us on the obscure way. Among these lesser names on mine is Franz. But if any one had told me, on that evening of my arrival in Franz, that this hamlet, this grotesque hutch, called Franz, was to be written on my heart, was to be anything but forgotten, and that as soon as possible, I should have shifted the subject to one that the person knew something about.

I arrived at ten of the night. It was the night of the sixteenth of August. I alighted on the platform, slipped, slid, and sat. My hands felt a coldish substance on the boards. My eyes saw little sparkles winking at me in derision. To the two or three men standing about I said, "Is this really frost? Not that I doubt it."

"Yes, sir," they said; "this is the coldest place in Canada, next to White River."

"But it 's the middle of August."

"That 's right," they said; "summer 's about over. Up the line to White River they don't have any summer, strictly."

Now, I had heard of White River before. All those winters I used to misspend in Philadelphia, I would gaze at White River on the weather-map and wish I were there. For in Philadelphia it not only never rained but it poured, it also never snowed but it rained. In White River it was

either snowing thawlessly or it was clear and fifty below. I felt rather a thrill to be so near White River. I also felt a chill, and asked to be directed to the hotel.

"It's the other building," they said, "up there."

Before I left them we looked at the thermometer. It was just twenty-six above. The sky toward the north had that cool green look of unripened apples. I shouldered my duffle-bag and started up the hill toward the other building, thinking that for once Franz must be quite as cold as White River. And to say a place is as cold as White River is conclusive. I kept thinking this through the night.

It was a steel-blue morning. The sky looked as if built of the best Bessemer, and even my fingers and nose took on the same tinge. But down-stairs there was a fire roaring in the central stove, and Mrs. McDougall brought in a breakfast which disposed one to continue living. Her husband, a six-footer with quiet voice and quiet manner, appeared with more wood.

"Quite brisk, is n't it?" he said.

"It's Siberian," I said, "and I suppose the airplane won't go up this morning."

"The airplane has n't quite come," he said, gently.

"What do you mean?" I asked brusquely, my

hope taking a tail-spin. "Has n't *quite* come."

"We heard it had started, but it has n't arrived yet. We 've been expecting it two weeks now."

"Mon Dieu!" I muttered quite subconsciously, remembering those moldy days at Roberval. I looked out of the window. There lay Franz. To wait an hour or so in Franz promised a fatigue of sameness. To wait a day was unthinkable; longer than that, a clear proof of unreason. I left the hotel to plan.

Nature, as every one knows, consists of town and country. God is held responsible for the latter, but man is supposed to have made the towns. Any child, however, could have made Franz. A bird's-eye view of the place disclosed comparatively nothing. The tracks of the Canadian Pacific arrived from the east and left toward the west. Those of the Algoma Central issued from the bush on the south to disappear into the bush on the north. Where these railroads crossed was an operator's tower, a shack for tools, and a platform. Near-by was a store. There was no street, no lane, no bypath. Consequently there were no automobiles, no horses. It was not even a one-horse town, for there would have been no place to exercise him.

Should the bird have alighted for a closer scrutiny, it would not have been bewildered, as in other towns, by a maze of offices, public

libraries, and fire companies. It would have discovered a pool-room, a lunch-counter, a lake, four or five families of Indians (which means fifteen or twenty children and forty or fifty dogs), a lake, and about a million acres of wild blueberries covering the rolling hills. This was Franz. This was the place where I was to wait and let the sands of time filter through my fingers, my cold fingers. I stepped into the house labeled, "A. V. Selkirk, General Store and P. O."

There was nobody in it. This did not surprise me. Why should anybody choose to prolong life in Franz by purchasing groceries? On the other hand, why should a storekeeper take the pains to lay in such enticing wares? My eye was at once entranced by a flannel shirt of blue checks on a foundation of black. I must have this. Some socks spoke to me. Then as my eyes became accustomed to the dusk, I saw the whole glorious panoply of the North—woolen things that warm the heart as well as the body—and then the utensils of life, clean canoe paddles, new tump-lines, traps and ammunition, sides of bacon and tins of coffee. I loitered along, touching, looking, coveting, fetching up with a start before a cubbyhole marked "P. O." to see a man at a bench composing a letter. He was a man of the middle years, whose nose spoke of encounters, whose eyes did actually twinkle, whose mouth would not refuse

a smile to you. I bought a post-card; I must talk to some human being, and this seemed a legitimate interruption. It was A. V. Selkirk himself.

"Going to be in town long?" he asked in a likable voice.

"Till the 'plane arrives," I said boldly.

"It ought to be along any day now."

"In which case—that is, supposing it won't be here for a day or two," I suggested, trying not to falter, "just what would you do?"

"Oh, do?" and I saw that twinkle in his sympathetic eyes. "Do? Well, you might rest up."

"To be frank with you," I said, "resting makes me tired. What do you find to do—here?"

"Oh, I find enough!" he replied at once. "I 'm helping to run a gold-mine we have down the road at Goudreau, and the mail takes a little time, and so does this store. You have to keep the stock up, you know, and stake the Indians and see that they don't run up too big a debt on you. Then I have a right smart business in furs. And I go to Toronto every so often; we 're pretty much interested in the laws they make down there. And the pulp business requires some looking into, if you own much; and of course I like to fish and hunt a little; and I 'm writing up a history of the Indians around here. Their language interests me. There 's almost always something or other to interest a fellow around here."

During his recital I had felt my mind expanding by thrusts and bounds. He now came from his den, and we sat on a counter. He talked; I listened. At one minute before noon I left that store clothed in the check shirt and another mind. It had been a fascinating three hours. Selkirk had come along to Franz during the construction days of the C. P. R. According to him all men were potentialities for handcuffs in that place and era, and the days which were not enlivened by hold-ups were at least made livable by brawls. To make oneself immune to murderers was the first lesson in survival, and I gathered that life on the frontier resembled life in the Dark Ages in an extra dark spell. I do not mean to convey that Selkirk boasted. He told me lots of tales in which he was the scared but lucky winner. In reality he was a rather tender-hearted man who believed in a square deal. Not from him but from others, later, I corroborated my guess that he, with his genuine regard for the good Indian and his past, would treat him decently. I mentioned it one evening.

“How can you help it?” he said. “It works this way: I give old Rednose here a two-hundred-dollar grub-stake. He goes into the bush with the best intentions in the world. He expects to pay me back in the spring. He has a good winter and comes out with six hundred dollars’

worth of furs. But he meets a Jew trader on his way out. These fellows are creeping in. He hides his furs; for he wants to be honest. He says he has none. But he cannot say no long; no Indian can. The Jew trader makes him show his furs, paws them over and over, talks, talks, talks, beats him down, gets the Indian so confused he doesn't know right from left, and finally he wakes up to find he's swapped his winter's catch for a third of its worth. Then he is ashamed; for he is sensitive. He goes and drowns his grief in drink, thus dropping the rest of his money. Then Mr. Selkirk gets a letter saying, 'All family sick this winter, poor winter, next winter better luck, please send two hundred dollars more.' "

"And you send it?" I asked.

"What else is there to do? If I send it, I may get all back. If I don't, I'm sure not to. There's a lot of competition down here by the railroad. The Hudson's Bay Company, Revillon Frères, and I have been having a nice little three-cornered war for years. But it was a clean war, with all the rules understood, and none of this stinking cutthroat stuff introduced by fellows without conscience or self-respect."

As I walked back to my hotel, I realized that half a day in Franz had already gone. This Selkirk, this energized and energizing storekeeper, had opened half a dozen windows in what I, in my

blindness, had thought a blank wall. The afternoon ahead already seemed too short to accomplish my plans. I felt even a little ruffle of disturbance when Mr. McDougall said, "The gas for the airplane arrived this morning."

I was put at a table with a spare, obviously cultivated man, and his wife, a woman with smiling, kindly face, and hair brushed smoothly back in the fashion of my people, the Friends. This was a surprise in Franz. I had not sat through the meal till I guessed that it was a blessing. Before my time was up, I knew that Franz the rich, the varied, the birthplace of adventure, had done her most grateful thing in introducing me to the A. L. Webbs, English explorers.

There is a pleasant disease called Anglomania. It is contracted in its virulent form by capitalists' daughters who gaze longingly across the ocean from their rich but humble homes to the bright and elevated British peerage. There is a milder form experienced by nearly everybody, I should suppose, who has cast an eye about the world and seen how well it is run by the English. This disease, even if chronic, as it is with me, need not blind one. I can admit that the British have built their success out of a desire for wealth. But it seems a charitable selfishness which leaves one's prey better off than he was before. I can also admit that the British have a cold pride in their

domination. But the principles of British rule seem to me to make the strength of the world. British character has the soundness of a granite mountain-side, on which the esthetic turf is a trifle thin, to be sure, but to which one looks for asylum during earthquake.

Of course the Britons have been the splendid adventurers over the earth, and their wives have been helpmates instead of clots of sentiment about the neck. Both Mr. and Mrs. Webb were highly typical of these qualities. Their job was to stride about the earth reading financial reports from stones and assaying mines under the auspices of a great British company. They spoke of the Gold Coast and the Cape of Good Hope and other removed places, and, having lived penetratingly in each, told me things which made me feel as if the globe were full of a number of things, each one of which was an importunate invitation. There is something local about most conversations, about most people's thoughts. It is good discipline to read astronomy and eat with travelers. I was carried out of myself and out of Franz, and when they went up-stairs to work, I felt that I had been up in a sort of universal plane looking down on many kingdoms. It is the comic paper joke that the Englishman is reserved and cold. So he is, to the point of wisdom. He refuses maddeningly to parade his heart, which he considers a personal

possession, like a digestion. But he is always refreshingly himself, since long ago he learned the fundamental truth that to be oneself, imperturbably, is to be the master of success. And self-mastery need not preclude humor, tenderness, or the desire to be agreeable. An Englishman's thoughts and experiences are at the service of all who will intelligently converse, with only enough well-bred egotism to keep the truth from seeming dull. So it was that my meals in Franz became events. And now this remarkable place was to offer me another encounter.

A young fellow, clad in a gay Mackinaw that warmed the corner where he sat, was gazing out over the wide view of water-tanks, railroad tracks, and blueberry-bushes. He had good shoulders and a finely turned head, and the absolute of health gave his face a color, his eyes a light, which confirmed his features in attractiveness. He did not seem to mind the glacial air which swept the porch. Hardiness like his knows no seasons.

"What do you say to a walk?" I ventured.

"Fine," he said, and Ren Kenshol smiled the way a man smiles when he leaves jail. "It's pretty bad sitting around."

"But where?"

"Anywhere; it's all the same, just bush."

We decided to strike north. I had found a companion who was a timber cruiser by trade, to

whom physical effort was a boon and the mustiness of towns a plague, in whose veins flowed a passion for the forest. Ten such could have conserved a state. He had individuality, the strength to foster the virtues in his blood, and he also had the charm of generous manners. I found myself listening to his tales of moose-chasings and bush predicaments not only as tales but as revelations of his character. Character in youth seems a gift, like genius. Older men ought to have laid it up, but to have known a boy with convictions, who is honest and able and aspiring, is to have known Fortunatus.

As we walked by one lake after another, I asked the old questions which I always ask: Do you mind being alone so much? What do you think about? Toward what are you working? The answers regulate my interest in the man. If he cannot bear to be by himself, or, being by himself, is resolved into a waking slumber by the predicament; if he be active, but only circularly and not spirally, then he is not yet a man. No matter if he sweat under his individual collar, he is not very interesting, for he bears no relation to the true progress.

Kenshol, however, was awake. His solitude was fruitful, his brain busy with tying the affairs of the forest to those of mankind, and his

future an upward progress through the company he worked for into wider interests. Meanwhile he was all boy, would be all man. His chief error of judgment was that I could walk fifteen miles of an afternoon through the unmitigated bush as easily as he could. But when I emerged upon Franz, in the twilight with my tongue out, glowing in body and content in mind, I suddenly discovered that I was glad to be in Franz.

Eight days later I was still glad. God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform, as the old hymn says, and with me the airplane is His most favorite device. With it He disciplined me in French Canada, as if His other measures there had not been ample. In Franz He opened my eyes by the same method. I had my flight, though no airplane came; it was a flight of fancy, of understanding. A hotel-keeper and his wife, a storekeeper, a timber-cruiser, an English mining expert and his wife, a telegraph operator, an Indian or two—these became the glasses through which I looked into the race more intelligently. Hereafter I shall not quail before a sojourn in any desert, if there be but two or three gathered together there with me. I enjoy and need the amenities of civilization. I should not like to live in Franz forever. But as long as I did live in Franz I was strangely unencumbered and curi-

ously happy. I look back on it as perhaps one day I shall look back at the world, not as the universe certainly, yet a place where hearts were warm and where the hours passed as a tale that is told.

CHAPTER XIX

OUR WEEK-END

“CHOOSE the nicest week-end you can,” she had said in the letter. That, from her, was not only a dear command; it was a large order. We two had known week-ends whose subtle flavor, emanating from the bouquet of days, was the faint perfume of pity for those who had never known their like. There had been one of foot-travel along vast ridges looking down into valleys where lights shone early. There had been one of Brahms, Tschaikovsky, and the opening night of “Peer Gynt.” There had been one where a lean-to, surrounded by a solitude of rainy forest, had listened to the laughter of two who were wholly happy. For we knew that happiness lay only along the line of one’s life, that only tragedy lay off it, and we had cared for each other to that extent.

So with these memories I could not send her a mean little week-end, one which anybody could bag by merely going into the park. As each Sunday passed I inspected it critically. Each was defective in some minor detail. One lacked a

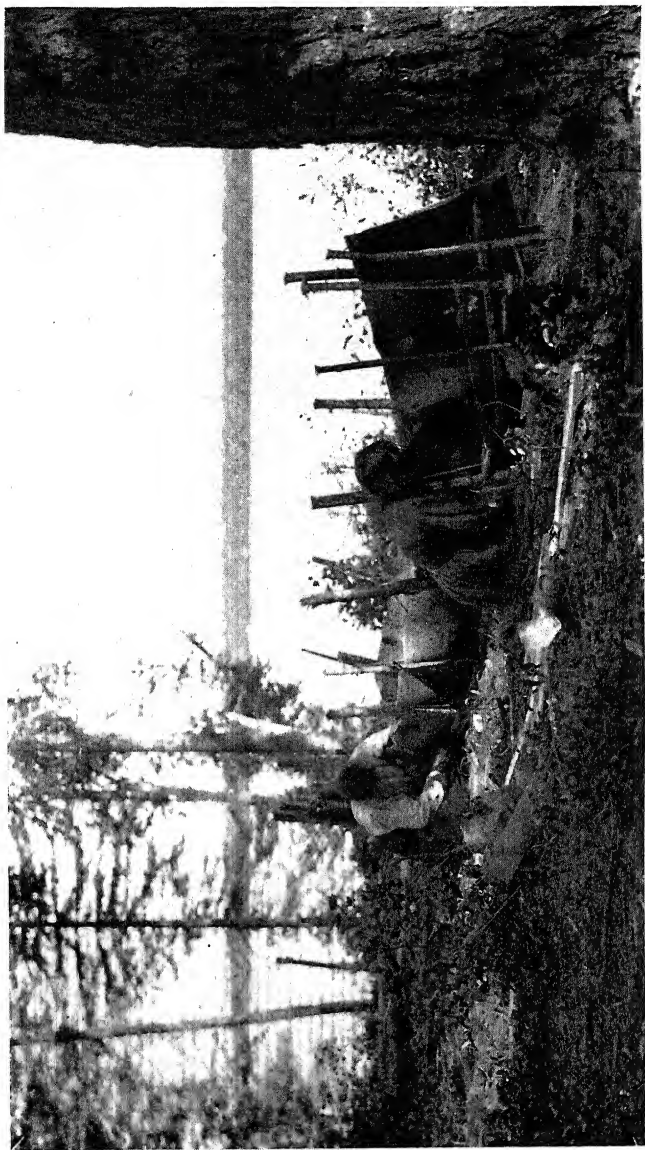
moon. In one the company was too loquacious. On the last, things had been too easy. I refused to tender her any hobbledehoy of a week-end. Hers must be original, ultimate, and of beauty unsurpassed. Was I to see her brush back the brown, blown hair with that impatient gesture and look at me quietly, deeply, until I was conscious only of having been content with some idle, impoverished, easy time; of having squandered this golden moment which ought to have been the heart and core of all my summer? Not that! I should exhaust the calendar and the country first. And I had come near doing it. Autumn, or what they called autumn and I midwinter, was upon me, and the perfect vintage was not yet. I sat in Franz and thought about it.

Then came the inspiration, on a Friday. On *our* week-end I should risk something for something better. Was not that her idea of romance? Why not risk the week-end itself? Why not set forth and let it happen. Under her auspices it must be nice. I tore off this note:

Franz.

Akweris;

Our week-end is about to happen. I've oiled my shoes, stuck some food in a knapsack, mended an extra sock, and taken a new part of the map. It shall all be adventure. Be plastic, chérie. It begins grandly enough because McCormick the blest has put his rail-



Courtesy of F. A. Waugh & Canadian Geological Survey

THE CANOE-MAKERS

road at my disposal. He's the kind of man who will go direct to heaven, postpaid. I'll write upon the consummation. The engineer whistles. You will be with me every minute.

T.

"I hope you're not nervous," said Worth, as he tucked me on the speeder.

"Why should I be?"

"It's sort of open-work transportation," he laughed.

"There are only three things that make me nervous," I said, "argument for convincement's sake, women who live by conversation, and trying to enjoy two things at once."

"You're safe, then"; and we were off. In five minutes I sincerely regretted not having told him I was a nervous wreck, for I was convinced that we should be the other kind in a minute. Lakes began to shoot by. At first they were long lakes with wooded islands, promontories, coves. As the speed increased they became lakes with islands. Then just lakes. Clouds began to fly at us from the far horizon, as they fly in Verdi's "Otello" when it is properly stage-managed. Rain fell. Or rather it coursed at us. Lightning fell; also at us. Once I thought we were hit, but was afraid to look. We, apparently, were the lure of the wild. The thunder was especially interested, piling around our ears and trying to

carry us away with it. But Worth disdained nature, disdained gravity, or the fact that trees, moose, or travelers struck by lightning might be lying across the tracks. And having done the twenty-six miles in something like forty minutes, we rolled into Michipicoten Harbor insouciantly enough and almost collided with a private yacht lying by the dock. Beyond that was a private sea-plane.

"The base deceivers!" I said. "I was told that this was the wildest spot on Lake Superior, and here's a regular levée of the wealthy and their vehicles."

"First time it ever happened," said Worth. "Most of the year there are just two families and myself here and a few Indians over at the mission. We'll go into the Oakeses' and get dry."

Charlie Oakes and his wife were a delight to me for this reason; they were a happily married couple who were progressively content to stay in one place and enjoy it. Mrs. Oakes, flying around to make us comfortable, was a cheerful body whose long residence in a place, which any one would admit was an end of the earth, had not deprived her of her natural sprightliness and love of mirth. Mr. Oakes, a tall, rough-barked man, had rooted well in this wilderness, and he put forth annually an interesting crop of experience.

When we arrived the Oakeses were entertaining the population at tea, of whom the high lights were Mr. Yachter Trethewey and a young fellow who had explored the McKenzie River, and Mr. Flying-boat Judson and his guests. As at Franz, I found myself listening to narratives strange but true. There is this about the wilderness: people go there of their own will; there is no dead wood, no nourishment for parasites; bores die of the chill, and cranks perish for want of an audience. I was sorry that the gale passed in the night; for, with the sun, yachts, flying-boats, and speeders disseminated into the sparkling void, leaving me to gaze upon an empty harbor. But the air was left, and I took two deep drafts of it, one for me and one for her, and sought out Charlie to consult as to getting a week-end under way. He had a boat with a roof and a good engine, and Mr. McCormick had prepared him; so the man promptly forsook the Algoma Central and put his mind on our problems, adding, "I 'm right keen on doing a little exploring myself."

"The young lady with us prefers exploration to anything," I said.

"The young lady!" exclaimed Charlie with rolling eyes. I laughed and showed him a little photograph of our directress.

"Oh! That 's her, is it?" he said, examining the picture intently. "I reckon she 's not the sort

to yell if the wind kicks up a bit. We 'll try to give her a good time."

I went to the store to collect provisions while Charlie was finding an Indian and some gas.

"I 'd like a dozen eggs," I said to the salesman.

"Sorry, but a fishing-party took all our eggs," said he.

"Then we 'll have to have a lot of bacon."

"Too bad," he said; "we 're júst out of bacon. The private yacht—"

"Well, how about bread?"

"What a shame! The flying-boat bought the last loaf."

"Tea?" I whispered, with infinite control.

"Yes, I think we have a little tea left."

So, on a basis of tea, sugar, flour, beans, and butter, I built up some menus, not too luxurious, but lasting; and reached the boat, to find Charlie, the gasolene, and Jim Andrie, an Ojibway, another of the silent clan but with a frank face not unaccustomed to smiling. I boarded the *Aro* with that elation that a starting into the unknown always gives me; the motor, unlike motors, was willing to start with us; and we were soon pointing out around the cape.

Michipicoten Harbor is a three-mile bowl of water held by great granite arms. Here used to be an important post of the Hudson's Bay Company, whence in a sixteen days' journey supplies

were shipped in to James Bay. Once it had known the activities of mining days, and Mr. Clergue had built a cabin on a charming islet, a sort of outpost of his, whence the battle could be conducted better. Now raspberries crept from crevice to crevice, the blueberries rotted unpicked, and Michipicoten was sinking into dissolution with not ten souls looking on.

The *Aro* had not sooner darted from shelter than she felt a low wide swell from the southwest, a reminiscence of the evening's storm. A scene of the utmost grandeur spread before. On the left, high shores sunk to the southward; on the right a mountain range rose into soft mists, a flight of cloudy islands, which, thinning overhead, let down the sun. Far on, Point Isacor shot out from shore, a javelin of blue stuck into the gray side of the sea. While the dim bulk of distant Michipicoten Island was swathed in clouds.

This was week-ending to perfection. I was master of an expedition. I was outward bound on a snug craft into the unknown. Before me lay a lake of inexhaustible wonder. Beauty trailed her clouds of glory on every hand, literally clouds of glory, for blue squalls issued from the fastnesses to the north and swept across the water, drawing a veil of gray across the green. I rode on the bow as in a swing, the *Aro* climbing, climbing the translucent swells to ease down into green

troughs. Only one delight was missing, the frequent joy of nudging her who had made this possible, to be sure that she was seeing the latest marvel on the shores.

The shore was a mountain range, gashed and wind-grieved as the Apennine, but with no castles cozily ensconced. There was no coziness here, nothing but grandeur and loneliness. I was to see loneliness during the next days as I had never known it. Vast inviting reaches of wilderness, interspersed with little natural harbors, with little rivers, forests, peaks, and beaches, all starkly uninhabited, and almost through its sternness uninhabitable. The *Aro*, keeping about five miles from shore, paralleled this donjon of the gods, an indefatigable, happy, little thing, surrounded by desperate elements.

And now, as we chugged along under the high arch of noon, the gods decided to wipe us from the earth. Their reconnoitering squalls having been ineffectual, they now launched squadrons of real wind upon us. We could see the white rain leap the ramparts and charge across the lake, exhorted by a flying sun. It was unportrayably beautiful—and dangerous. I had directed that we be cursed with no fixed objective, but should be governed by inward impulse and outward circumstance. The first outward circumstance had quite obviously begun.

"Head her in, Jim," ordered Charlie, disappearing to inspect the works.

"We forgot Naniboujou; that 's the trouble, is n't it, Jim?" I said, peering into his imperturbable face. He smiled me a little smile, and I knew the beginning had been made. I threw a pinch of cube-cut into the lake. Were I Vergil I should say that the waves now began to go down. And so they did; but it was because we were nearing shore, I regret to add.

I had thought no coziness was possible. Like most travel thoughts, it was an over-hasty generalization. We entered a tiny cove by the Dog River, called Gut Harbor. On three sides rose towering hills, lichened cliffs topped with forest. Above them was the hurrying sky; from the tossed ravines came the cry of valkyrs and the noise of windy onsets. But in our well of quietness was peace, and the tumult of the riding hosts seemed unreal and far away. Charlie got out a portable stovelet, Jim the flour, and I was initiated into the how of Indian trapper bread, the bush bannock.

Jim was neat if non-syllabic. He invariably washed his hands when he ought to have. Into a saucepan he put some flour, a tablespoonful of baking-powder, some tinned milk, and kneaded the stuff, into which went boiling lard but no salt. Rolled into thin cakes with a hole in the center,

and fried like a doughnut, the result was crisp and good.

Although the gale still vexed the trees, Jim and I decided to take the canoe, which had been lashed to the cabin, and fish close to shore. This was a safe excitement, for the swells rolled dignifiedly along without breaking, and there was a lane between the rocks and the ruffled water offshore where the wind first got its claws in. Jim paddled; I trolled. In three minutes I said I'd caught bottom; he said fish; and, taking his word for it, I pulled in an eight-pound lake-trout with more labor than excitement. It offered no more fight than a paralyzed sardine. It did not even try passive resistance. But it was beautiful, highly edible, and enough; so we turned to discovery.

To any one seeking an enjoyably difficult time, I recommend the Dog River. It rushed from a great wooded cañon which withstands exploration indefinitely. I can imagine that this one spot would last a family of explorers a whole season. We, I do not blush to say, soon turned back. I was beginning to see why this high, forbidding stronghold was so deserted. On our way back in the canoe Jim told me about the troubles of trapping in the hinterland until I wondered at the power of the ancient lure to draw men to such extremities.

To be out on the great lake in a canoe was to enjoy the brightness of life and be at the same time cognizant of its fatal shadow. Yet, I contest, there are only two vehicles which are really safe on Lake Superior, an ocean liner and a canoe. The one can either outride the gale or turn and do battle with it; the other, never far from shore, is never far from safety, and on the few rigorous coasts can always be drawn up. We had no trouble in riding the swells, foam-mottled as they sometimes were, allowing no accidental disadvantage, taking no risk, yet enjoying a swinging that was in the last degree exhilarating. That night, as I lay listening to the upper wind, I reviewed the day and decided that she had approved, she who was with us momentarily.

Next morning was attired in splendor, the lonely earth a mere glittering sequin on the gown of dawn. We coasted the great line of precipices entitled "No Landing for Boats" on the chart. Point Isacor terminated this rugged wall, its cold rock making the Hatteras of the region. Thence we turned northwest, and soon ran into wind. Again were we forced to seek shelter and again found an exquisite haven, Pilot Harbor, where a bit of calm sat in the eye of a raging noon.

It was here that I discovered a disused road, whereby some timber had been taken out; and, deciding to follow it back toward Hudson Bay, I

had an amusing experience. It was an old road exquisitely overgrown, a cloister in the eternal wood, and its curves were continuous with beauty, leaving no breach of loveliness between the beauty coming and the beauty gone. As I tip-toed along, it occurred to me to pretend that I was starving, as I so often do in my own fiction, to see how much game might come in sight to relieve my hunger. I picked up a stick for a gun and sharpened my sight.

Now, I do not suppose that I had seen more than fifty moose that summer, more than five thousand partridges, with rabbits, ducks, and deer in like proportion. I would go before a notary public, however, with those figures. Yet during that walk I saw not one living creature except chickadees and snowbirds. I passed inviting partridge dust-baths in the sunny corduroy, passed raspberry-patches where bear ought to be communing, passed two lakes where the deer should have been contending with the moose, passed a beaver-dam, saw squirrel-tracks, rabbit-runs, woodchuck-wallows, caribou-crossings and duck-diggings, but not even a black fly came to soothe me. Had all life passed out of the world? The meaning of solitude came to me. It was not very terrible, for the beauty of that forest was transcendent, defying loneliness. But to be

treated so by my dinner was exasperating. The gods evidently had me slated to starve.

"All right," I said aloud, "I 'll starve"; and I threw away my gun. I had reached the end of the road, turned back, and was thinking how Nature achieved her beauty out of a myriad items of reality, when a trio of black ducks whirred along the water of the first lake. They startled me. But not so much as the hare which hopped out of a bush I was about to push through on my way to the water's edge. The gods were now sportive at my expense. I strode on in my (assumed) wrath when I heard a disturbed "Cluck, click," and Madame la Partridge strutted before me, her brood scuttling on all sides. We nearly came to blows before she decided to yield the contest and the road.

"I 'll bring back a real gun and bag this insolent wilderness," I thought, when I had the most exquisite of thrills, the delicious feeling of each separate hair rising up my spine, for there in the mud by the water was a large fresh track, the size of a man's hand with fingers out, and the water still oozing into the indentation. "Ah, Muckwa," said I, aloud, for it is the Indian custom always to address a bear, "be decent and let me see you, for Pan's sake." And I stood still, trying to pierce the green shade. But the old

deacon did n't hear me, I suppose, for he did n't show himself; and as I was afraid it might be a deaconess, with children, I did not follow.

"Do you ever see bear?" I asked Jim at lunch.

"Only some time," he said, "in the blueberry-bush."

Inflamed with this new interest, I climbed the hill behind the harbor, with the intention of stalking bears in the blueberry-pastures, since the day was still rife with wind. A view purged of mere prettiness opened on all sides. At my feet a granite cliff plunged into the green, clear lake. On either side bold promontories sat above folded paws in the manner of gigantic lions commemorating Trafalgars of the titan times. Along the south stretched the blue line of Michipicoten Island, where in the memory of man have dwelt certain spirits who do away with those who dare approach their island, as any savage will tell you. All across the horizon raced this sea, shoreless, whitecapped, blue, and more beautiful than fables.

The immensity, the enduringness, of this scene made it impossible to think of it in human terms, impossible to believe that it had been created in the interest of humanity. We of the race had come to play, as childlike spirits, for a few moments on earth's shores; but their dignity did not rest on that. To think otherwise seemed as

preposterous as to think that the eons had labored to bring forth my hilltop for the purpose of giving me the view. Man's egotism is the Satan of the play. It must be naïve and delightful and amusing to the Master of Life, whose children we are. Only, when the child drags his hand out of His, and says he has no Father, says he is the all, the self-sufficient, it must wry the Master's smile a bit. Praise ye the Lord, says David out of that deepest instinct, by which praise and thanks are the utterance of conscious souls. It is all wonder. The shock of water on rock, the opposed velocities of stars, the stress of love, the mystery of death, seem discords that clash at first but soon are resolved in the mind. What must the Mind then be that creates and holds such harmonies! What but Wonder, too. And, glancing down, I saw through the clear air Jim lying on his belly, as I 'd left him, trying to spear a trout that refused bait. He, also, knew the divine enchantment, his pagan heart, from which the holy water had quickly evaporated, holding to the greater miracle of Manitou. In that belief we were brothers, and neither of us lonely in this central solitude.

The wind stole off with the declining sun, and we strove westward along the coast, arriving at nightfall at a charming cove, into which a stream, full of moose, poured its waters. Cold as was

the stream, the lake was colder, and therein lay the trout. We tied up the *Aro* to a cliff which went straight down to the cellar of the earth, and part way down Jim spied a trout. He was a trout of the *n*th dimension. Charlie offered him a hook. He took it, ate it, digested it and came back for mine. This he took, too, biting off the gut as a boy yanks off a hunk of licorice. Jim suggested that we offer him the anchor. Not being a professional angler, I shall not asseverate how large that trout was. It tired the eye to rove over his speckled surface. I suppose a real fisherman would snuffle with sentiment merely to recall him. But he left me cold. I wanted less fish and more bread. We had seen smoke from the shore a piece back, and so I suggested to Jim that we paddle thither, allowing Charlie to grapple with the mastodon in his own way.

The smoke came from a chimney that issued from a cabin which housed a hospitable soul named David McMorran. This gentleman was sitting before a vista of lake and shore, a veritable picture of *Crusoe* watching a sunset. I put in to buy bread. I put out with two loaves, some cabbages, a few sweet potatoes, a little cake, and some interesting suggestions about the neighborhood. What other gifts he wished to press on me, I could not carry, fortunately; but chiefly his interest in our cruise and my errand evoked my

gratitude. Mr. McMorran's generosity shines in my memory now as a little spark of fire along that fireless coast. From Michipicoten Harbor to Heron Bay, one hundred and fifty miles or more, barring a lighthouse keeper at Otter Cove, a logger here and a trapper there, no one lives or even summers on this wondrous shore but Mr. McMorran, and he during August only. I envy him his grandeur, and thank him now for the open-heartedness which invests it so pleasantly in my thoughts.

As we withdrew I saw that we were about to be swept off our feet by a sunset. On a western cape stood a palisade of pointed firs, through which poured fire as from the center of glory. On the east, a rounded moon of old silver stood between two islets, unreal and flaming in the gale of color. The lake was a flood of light. For a moment the beauty and the soul were still, while Jim and I were caught up into this heaven. I wished that the girl who had made it visible to me could see. She was looking zenithward at a different star. And it is always so. Had she been there, our heights would still have been isolate and incommunicable.

"Did you see the sunset?" we asked Charlie on returning.

"No," he said, "but I got that fish," grinning a grin nearly as wide as the trout that lay along

the deck, which, like others I have known, had been fished for with a fly and caught with a worm. So we all were happy.

I should have preferred to keep on sailing westward like Columbus, but there are no gasoline wells on the shores of Superior, and I had some conscience about commandeering the Algoma Central's shipmaster for too long a time. That night the wind raved from the south, and Charlie, prophesying war should it switch to the west, counseled a return while return was possible. So we turned the *Aro* sadly.

That was a riotous day. You have seen pictures of a sloop rounding Cape Horn, chased by a billow as large as the perspective will permit, the helmsman just saving his craft from its curving jaw, while rivers of surf pour from the scuppers? Well, that picture would do as well for us. A following swell would hurry us along, careen us, swirl by, and leave us drooping in the hollow waiting for the next. A line of leaping white danced at the base of the great crags. Point Isacor, calm above the iridescent brightness at her foot, repulsed the climbing lake. Only the five-mile range, its grimness unapproachable by any wave, was calm. It had seen too much of this sort of thing to think about it. But for me it was supreme fun. "Akweris, if you were only

here," I thought as we raced, "what a week-end this would be!"

And when, after long hours of it, we dropped into the quiet of Michipicoten Harbor, when I saw the Sunday afternoon sun weakening, when Jim said his monosyllabic good-by and Charlie closed the *Aro's* cabin door, I realized with a barbed pang that it was over, that a week-end of swift and deep delight was drawing to a close. I did not know, for the gods keep a secret marvelously close, that the best was yet to be.

CHAPTER XX

OUR WEEK-END: SUNDAY NIGHT

‘**T**O be outdoors is to be happy,” I wrote in my note-book for reference when unhappy. “This is an axiom as true as any other axiom.” I did not mean by outdoors the crowded air of Fifth Avenue, or even the mowed suburban lawn. I meant far enough out to be out of sight of indoors. I looked about me at the extensive desert across which the waters of the Magpie River had scampered for many an eon. Behind me lay six miles of climbing up from Lake Superior, before me twenty miles of the completest wilderness. I sat in a shower of solitude. In that expanse of bush were veritable wolves and moose, but no men. I was on the inside of adventure at last. Realizing this, Joy spread her wings and bore me along. All doubts of life were disconcerted and put to flight before her. And this had been accomplished, this happiness, by merely staying out of doors.

It had come about this way. I had followed Charlie Oakes into his house, and we had told Mrs. Oakes of the trip, and then I realized that

the afternoon, the night, the next day, and maybe another were on my hands. The week-end would die of inanition. I would have to send it home to her dead, and no amount of flowers would conceal the fact that there had been a burial. It would seem almost as dismal as a week-end in an automobile. I looked at the sunshine blowing in the window. Inspiration came. Inspiration does not come to one, I now know, it comes from one; and of a sudden I felt that I must join the flowing sunshine outdoors. I would walk out to the junction instead of waiting for the speeder or the weekly freight. To the Oakeses I now communicated this astonishing thought.

"Why, it 's twenty-six miles," said Mrs. Oakes.

"I can rest if I 'm tired."

"But you have no blanket."

"I have matches." Mere bravado this, thought I.

"It 'll be night in a few hours," said Mrs. Oakes.

"The better to see the moon by."

"Sha'n't I get supper for you first?"

"Thanks, no, but if you 'd do up a couple of sandwiches . . ."

And so I started, a bundle of lunch and coat over my shoulder as in those old woodcuts of Hans the Jolly Journeyman setting out on his *Wanderjahr*. Once I turned to wave good-by to

gnarly Charlie, captain of the *Aro* and lieutenant of a most precious week-end, and to Mrs. Oakes, whose smile of speeding the guest was still struggling with her doubt as to his sanity: twenty-six miles, night, no blanket, wolves. Well, had she known it, equally tense questions scuttled through my mind. But I wanted to test the mettle of adventure, to see if the years had drowned the boy in me. I wanted to be alone with my lady. And there was nothing to it, anyway. You all know what a little girl is made of, and a little boy, and now I shall tell you that man is made up of his hungers and his self-respect. When the self-respect walks amicably with the hunger, he is happy.

The old railroad-track led continuously up, so that, like Joshua, I was able to keep the sun at the same height for a long while. Suddenly the lake shone below. The lake! How its fingers had got a fierce grasp on me! I should never rid my heart of their marks, should never want to. And here I was leaving it. But only to return again. I had spent too much of the summer away from it. I should stay by it hereafter.

The road wound ahead into a soft eastern sky, and on all sides a great expanse of heaven opened out. I determined to rest every hour, and it was at the second of these times that I sat me by the Magpie River writing in the note-book

things full of experience if not so full of sense. . . . "To let the influences of nature play on you is to know true calmness. Go outdoors suffering from a bruised heart or a stagnant income, and she will see to it that you live in a state of arrested anguish at the least. Perhaps if you have robbed a widow or run over an orphan in your haste to escape, she may require a day to weave forgetfulness about you; but add fatigue to her efforts, and the result will come. Nature files down the rough edges of sorrow. She throws her arms about the soul. She betrays intellect, dispels religions, anesthetizes culture and even conscience, if she be yielded to utterly. But let a man betake himself to her for solace and still mind himself, and she will content and fortify him without fail. To be outdoors is to be happy."

I looked from my bridge down at the waters of the Magpie, amazed that after having been accustomed to this course for a hundred million years or so, they should be still so undecided where to flow next. Now they scampered in mortal terror of some big rocks, now halted in a pool to get breath. Strange, thought I, that the stream which acts like a water nursery here can grow up into such manly brutal waves ten miles further on. Water stands for more than eternal youth. It is eternal infancy and eternal maturity as well. Below the riffle was a great rock like a

pulpit, before which the river paused to hear, I suppose, one of those sermons in stones (seeing it was Sunday), and I should have liked to know the text. But my attention was diverted from the service by an extra brown stone starting upstream, shaking its antlers—a truly magnificent moose. Nearer he came, the large tranquillity of his vegetarian mind showing in his calm, grassy gestures. Once the sun caught his hide, and he glistened like an angel moose. His eyesight was bad, and since the air was from him to me, he never suspected that there was a man above him who could, with a little of David's marksmanship, have felled him with a pebble. Moose must have the same superstition about bridges that men have about ladders, for just as I was hoping that I could drop a stone on his antlers so that he could home and tell Scripture stories to the children about the portent, he branched off and abandoned me.

The next leg of the journey was consummated in a shamelessly extravagant sunset. This was the first performance I ever attended which was given exclusively for me, and I rather deprecated the lavish expenditure of color. If it were necessary to clothe the whole east in salmon pink, why not have let it stay a while instead of immediately refitting with sea green? And was not the clearness of the sky really beautiful enough without

those expensive hangings of embossed and beaten gold in the west, which at the loveliest moment were replaced with innumerable arabesques of flame? But I stopped and tried to be grateful. Not that it was hard to be grateful, but to be big enough for gratitude was hard. It burst one. There was so much of beauty, so little of me. A breath as from beyond the limits of life seemed to come from the north, so clear was it there, so released from earth the very earth itself. The spruces about me glowed with an intenser green, and the forest, usually so bathed in melancholy, threw off its sadness and donned a cloak of gold, through which its still dark heart was only hinted.

Slowly the glory faded. I passed a deep-set lake, a forest tarn, where three deer were having a light Sunday night's supper on water-lilies, slapping their tails about like pasture sheep. I watched them until it made me hungry.

Oakes had told me of a forest ranger who lived ten miles in, and had suggested that I spend the night with him. I found him at home, a hospitable man of thirty-two, I suppose, and he put the kettle on. I drank his tea, heard his talk about the Helen Mine near-by, over which the moon was rising; but I withstood his invitation to stay. I wanted the night with my lady, and the seclusion of that waste. He did not argue, as a less truly hospitable person would. He did not beset

my ears with timorous suggestions. He did not even say that it was peculiar to wish to spend the night by the moon. I appreciated his tea, his talk, his offer of a bed, but most did I appreciate his consideration of my right to my own mind. The modern practice among fat-witted people of trying to persuade you to their pleasure, of endeavoring to convince you that your idea of enjoyment is faulty—these sluggish egotists are only less ridiculous than tiresome. I loathe argument about pleasure and, rapidly, the arguers. They who would cajole you to drink when you prefer abstinence, who would furnish you with company when you require solitude, are no true friends. I pray Pan, Naniboujou, and the just Lord that I may have the skill to avoid them in the future, or the wit to throttle. For in their presence a man and his mind are soon parted. . . . In twenty paces Gardiner's shack was merged with the shadow of the mountain; Gardiner himself I remember well.

And now, renewed with tea, washed in moonshine and embraced by stillness, I walked on the heights, on a plateau of being. The senses became refined, quickened; and nature showed her spiritual side. I thought for two.

"It is impossible," says pedantic old Bacon, that careful courtier, "to love and be wise."

"I think love to be the better part of wisdom,"



Photograph by Geo. Shiras, 3rd

FLASH-LIGHT OF DOE AND FAWN IN THE SPOTTED COAT



Photograph by Geo. Shiras, 3rd

FLASH-LIGHT OF A COON TAKING ITS OWN PICTURE

says my friend Hal, whose authority I would stack against Bacon's.

I should say that wisdom was the fruit of love. Nothing without desire.

So, as I walked, I laid far plans, set the abutments of bridges, throwing the filaments of desire across the gulfs now impossible, knowing that if the desire were followed out the crossing could be made. It is the most wonderful, most satisfying knowledge in the world. Suppose it, too, comes only from the desire? Suppose all heavens do? If they come, why belittle the manner of their coming. Meanwhile, she walked by my side, and this was a way to travel.

Travel, to some, means only a change of beds; for others it affords a change in the frame of mind. The mind ought to have a proper frame, ought to be hung in the best light to think by. For one this is noonday; for one, dawn, or moonlight. I like the ends of the day best, and next the light of half-moons. Half-moons, like budding loves, are best. Not that it is not well to see the cycle through, to know passion; but passion consumes, and the full moon is superlative, with naught but the less to be had from change. One must descend. Of course this, too, can be well. After the honeymoon the dark; but I should suppose the refreshment, too, of marriage. I wondered if there were any over the world who

conducted their affairs with a strict lunacy, who regulated their divine madness by the bright sphere.

Midnight arrived overhead. My legs were getting tireder now. But nature had not yet quite gone to sleep. A little breeze ran through the leaves, and a fringe of talk reached me, thin whisperings. There was a secret behind my back. Now and then a rabbit would rustle in the bushes. Once a hare warned his kin with a thud that sounded to my ears like the stamping of an imminent moose.

Lighting a cigarette to keep off the wolves, I sat down to rest. The night had reached the very peak of romance. The moonshine was softer than music; the air did not stir. The whole wilderness was listening. I was wrapped in loneliness, and in those spaces of forest and sky the life in me seemed a lean, inconsequential flame; but I was rather fond of it. I——

Swishhh!! the blood positively stopped in me. My spine shriveled. An apparition, a bird which outdid Tweedles Dum and Dee together for size, swooped out of nothingness and brushed my face with the air of its wings. An owl! Only an owl; but the spread of its wings, the horrible noiselessness of its coming, the brazen assurance with which it sat on a tree ten paces away to get me later, chilled me. Other owls called. I rose to

go, almost frightened. As I picked up my bundle, I listened; if ever there were to be wolves I should hear them now. I could not sleep there.

And now I was tired, but my brain took it out in silliness. Devastating puns, the orange-peel and bitten buns of humor, floated on my mind. Then the mind ceased, and I just walked. The night was monstrous afar, but beautiful near; and the wilderness seemed wonderfully homelike. And all at once I saw and recognized my bed, the bed of tiers.

All summer I'd heard tales of the Mounted Police and Indians camping without blankets and throwing themselves in the snow to sleep. I have some reverence for hardihood, and it was fun to be up against it. I looked at the pile of railroad ties. I wondered would they burn. I stood on one foot and considered. The foot ached. I sat down and considered. Dew ran from anything I touched like water from a dog's tongue. I was half asleep, but I would try. I fumbled around in the underbrush like a sleep-walker, got some dry fir-twigs, propped up some ties, and struck a match. Glory to Prometheus! In five minutes I had a slow, stanch fire eight feet long. It drove back the pouncing shadows, threw human health into my moon-drained mood, reawakened joy. What if I were a littleness in a monstrous universe, I was conquering it. Fire and I were

a match for owls, wolves, cold, moons, and wildernesses.

I strewed a few balsam fronds on the tie-pile, spread a handkerchief on some more for a pillow, laid my limbs on the shelf as on a bed of down, looked once at the fire, intended to look at the stars, but was lost, lost in the dim purlieus of sleep.

Were this a work of fiction I should say I slept undisturbedly till morning. Fact was, I woke, cold. A searching air was feeling me like a pick-pocket. But the fire was burning evenly. I scraped my green mattress to the ground, where the heat was reflected by the tiers of ties, and sank off to sleep again as cozy as a cat's muzzle. And when I woke it had long been morning. The fire still burned. I had had both comfort and my self-respect, had steeped my heart in beauty, and had three hours' sleep. Since there is something of the bargainer in everybody, I was delighted to have enjoyed both the cake and the penny, too.

Near-by a stream poured from pool to pool, and in one of them I immersed myself. The water was cold enough to turn one's limbs to a sorry lilac. But nothing could freeze the joy from my veins. And the ties still burned. So I toasted my last half-sandwich for breakfast, preceded by wild raspberries, buried my fire in gravel, and set on my way, praising God and pilgrimages and her.

CHAPTER XXI

PAWATINIKI

THE trail began at my feet, and, burrowing beneath some gigantic spruces, was gone.

"It 's a short four miles," said the operator.
"You 'll have no trouble following it."

"It 's worth the risk," I said.

"You can't miss it."

"It is n't the trail I 'm thinking about; it 's the man."

"He 's a good sort, is Devlin. He 'll be glad to see you. It 's the way here."

"I 'm not thinking about my welcome, either. Down there, if rumor be true, an actual man is living as I once lived in my dreams. He must have had the dream, or he would not be there. But he has stuck by his dream, which makes him a hero to me. For what is a hero but a man who is unbriably loyal to himself and his aspirations? Do you see why I hesitate to plunge to a meeting and a disillusionment? Encountering heroes is unsatisfactory."

"I 'd take the risk," persisted the operator.
"You 'll like him."

It was this chorus of persistent approval which had brought me to the brink. I now took the step, took two, and was swallowed up by the gloom of firs and towering birches. It was like looking into a book of folk-lore. Each step took me nearer the heart of the dark forest and into the presence of adventure. Only here the "Once upon a time" was written in actual curvings of the trail into the unknown, and "there lived a knight," was literally true: I should have to meet him in an hour. Also I should have to find conventional words to explain my coming. Each pace emphasized the preposterous fact that I had no explicable reason. I went through the various phases of the embarrassing meeting. He would be busy. He would look up as I approached.

"Longstreth's my name," I would say.

"Ye-es?"

"I am here because . . . because . . ." But how to go on? How could I say I was there because I wanted to see what he was like. It sounded zoölogical. Then my mind, constantly more harassed, would begin again. I would arrive holding out my hand, and say:

"Is this Mr. Devlin?"

"Ye-es." How damnable! Was there no way of getting further than that retort, that lifting of the brows, the stare which as good as said, "No, I would not like to buy anything to-day."

You can do a lot of thinking in four miles. The gloom of the forest increased. So did the size of the maples. They reduced my sense of importance like *Alice's* when she ate the mushroom. Once I stopped. "Here, insect," I said to myself, "this is a real scrape. You only thought it was romance. Here you are about to force yourself on these people, like a cold. The nuisance of having guests is usually optional with the hosts. What's the way out?" And I should have turned back if it had n't been for having to make an equally awkward explanation to that operator as well as wait a day or two for the next train. Meanwhile my feet were trundling my body downhill, ridiculously downhill. Nobody could ever get back by this trail; that was certain.

But nothing in life, except Europe, is ever as you think it is going to be. It's always better or worse. In Europe you can run along from the Venus de Milo to the Vatican crying, "Check," to each exhibit, so well has the guide-book done its dastardly work. But in life don't rely too heavily on guides. And now, in life, my fairy-tale was deepening in thrill. The gloom of spruce dwindled into a twilight, the twilight was rent with shafts of sun, and blinking I emerged upon a crescent shore to find myself on an enchanted cove of Lake Superior. The water shone in a sheet of blinding flame westward to the verge

of day. On the north rose a cliff of burning stone. On the south a mountain range rode far into the lake. And at hand, encircled by the forest, which protected it like the thought of dragons, I saw a house, a log cabin, a home, so beautiful, so cozily set within the grand scene, that it might have been the habitation of a domestic witch conjured up for private use. Here was my Dark Tower, to which I must advance and dauntlessly blow the horn.

There was no stir. I stepped up to the porch, which was glassed in and suggested books and winter and the hours of independence which all civilization toils to attain, being too blind to see they are won otherwise. Skis and snowshoes were temporarily lashed to the roof. The skis began to comfort me. I looked through the open window and saw, ye shades of Mozart! a Steinway grand. Ah, wilderness were Paradise enow! A Steinway, too. My nervousness exhaled a little sigh of relief and expired. It was true, then, all that the train-conductors, telegraph operators, and others had told me along the way.

Voices recalled me to the fact that I was snooping about a stranger's home. I saw, coming up the beach, a huge reddish wolf, trotting tongue out, as in the *Mowgli* illustrations, followed by two boys carrying a log of driftwood. With them was a young woman.



Courtesy of F. A. Waugh & Canadian Geological Survey

DRYING MOOSE MEAT

The wolf was the first to see me, and he approached, detecting meat on the hoof. He was a beautiful husky, and he looked better fed than most, but his mouth was watering; I saw it. I had read somewhere that instinct enabled dogs to distinguish friends from enemies by merely tasting them. But this dog did not look as if he would trust his instinct. After finishing me he might decide that I had been harmless enough. Before that he would not risk an opinion. On he came. It was here that the woman noticed, and, probably not liking her dog to eat between meals, she called, "Red," once, in a voice wherein good nature veiled a will, and Red halted about six inches from my calf. She and the boys approached. "I hope he didn't annoy you," she said.

"I never saw a handsomer dog," I said, which was quite true. "I should have found it difficult to refuse him anything."

"Red is quite abstemious," she said, with a smile, understanding.

"But perhaps the temptation of a stranger is not often thrown in his way?"

"Even then he would be discerning."

"Perhaps I am not too much a stranger," I said. "People who love pianos must have something in common. The moment I saw your piano, I felt absolved of intrusion a little bit."

"Intrusion?" she said, "Never that. Did you walk down? No one who has a reason or the interest to do that shall be called an intruder at Pawatiniki."

I introduced myself, not remembering then that this was to have been a horrid moment. She had her arms over her boys' shoulders. "My husband will be here in a few minutes. These are my boys, George and Russel." It stretched the rules of genealogy to believe it, but it sounded a bit fresh of me to say so. They were approaching their teens, neither shy nor inquisitive, and soon went to chop their daily wood. Their mother and I sat down on the porch, Red at our feet, his somberly wistful eyes trying to banish the thought of chops and steaks. I was finding an almost equal difficulty in not gazing too intently at my involuntary hostess. Her simple check dress, her outing hat with the grouse feather, her lovely chestnut hair which would blow in the way of her blue and smiling eyes, whose lids and tiny creases at the corners showed a tender and understanding humor, these and her atmosphere of happy health, of sincere and yet reserved cordiality, might have won any man, let alone a pensioner.

"I was interested," she was saying, "in your remark about the piano."

"In a beginning acquaintance it's a common

taste and not their race, religion, or previous condition of servitude that determines the plane on which people meet, don't you think?"

"Yes," she laughed, "but here I do scales less often than I do clothes. *Now* what plane are we on?"

"But you still like it, don't you?"

She assented.

"Then," I continued, "it 's the same plane still. The ability to find fun in common things is an even severer test than the Steinway. Friends hunt friends with equal horizons."

"As the unimaginative wealthy hunt them with equal purses," she said.

"It must take people with wide horizons to be friends to you," I ventured, looking out over the magnificence of lake.

"It is a pleasure to find one who looks at us in that way," she continued, "and who understands. In the city, I am afraid that they look at us as the simply mad, as two who have staked their happiness, money, and children on a whim, a dream."

"I look on you in that way," said I, smiling, "as brave and fortunate gamblers, brimming with wise dreams. In no other way could you have accomplished this dream-castle of a home."

"We call it Pawatiniki," she said quietly, "which is Ojibway for 'The House of Our Dreams.' Here comes my fellow-gambler."

A young man, a little over medium height, with good shoulders and aristocratic shanks, was nearing. He was bronzed, and had dark hair, and I saw that his eyes were steady and amused. It seems fitting of matrimony, and rather hard on the rest of us, that where you have a fine-looking woman it requires a handsome man to win her.

"Erle, we've been sought out"; and the humor did not quite leave her voice as she introduced me.

The amusement in his eyes reached his lips as he took my hand and said to her, "This is pretty nice, dear; this is fame." A dyspeptic would have liked them.

"You know Emerson's remark about the mouse-trap maker," I reminded him.

"Certainly," he smiled; "a path is worn to his door. Well, now that you're trapped, you'll spend the night with us?"

"I confess that I want to know the trappers," said I, and the corner-stone was laid. Thus a naked wish of mine became draped in reality. Again and again life has rammed this lesson home: that which I cordially admire is that which it is good for me to have, even though it must be taken boldly. The only catch lies in the species of the admiration.

We had supper on the porch with twilight lingering on the lake, that lake so far more wilful

than the sea. From my chair I could look down the beach, past the pine, and see the exquisite preparation for the night, could look to that precipice whose hundreds of feet shut off the north winds, and whose ruddy rock was made still warmer by the red-trunked trees. Toward the southwest lay Superior's greatest length, and they told me that often, under the autumnal gales, the waves piled in white masses on the point, the spray dashing a hundred feet high. Now all was hushed in this vast theater, as if the actors, gods all as they were, had gone to some faultless banquet of their own.

Just fledged from my nest of isolation, I reveled in the talk, the fun, and—let's be frank—the food. On this extraordinary freehold the cook was an Indian and an artist, the boatman a breed, the carpenter-farmer a Finn, and the waitress a puzzle. There was nothing abstract about our conversation. The boys were talking about the pony, or the new place for the nets, or the cave that Russel had found containing a curious odd-shaped earthenware bowl, not quite old enough to have belonged to the prehistoric ante-Indian race which is known to have lived on Isle Royale. "And yet, how come?" said Russ. "Who would crawl up into that cave but a prehistoric sort of person?"

This was the Devlins' third year in paradise,

and I could quickly tabulate certain gains which these boys had over the hundreds of city lads whom I have taught. They appeared to enjoy an inviolable health. They could wield the ax with any man, could paddle, run the motor-boat, knew the trees, the animals, the seasons. They could rely on themselves. It was Russ who had been penned up in an outhouse by a wolf in the first winter and had kept his head. They took turns doing the eight-mile jaunt for the mail. They *thought*. Their mother, with the help of a correspondence course, was preparing them for a boarding-school. Cousins and friends were imported for the necessary company. On nature's sure foundations were being erected these steady, stalwart personalities. And when they did go to Andover or St. Paul's, they would always have Pawatiniki to return to, the place where the Antæus mind could touch earth and renew its strength.

That evening George and I went trout-fishing in the lake and exchanged our views on life *à la Daniel Boone*. The next morning they were good enough to interrupt the busy life of Pawatiniki in order to picnic me down the coast, which I was keen to see. It was a shore of fierce picturesqueness. Companies of black spruce, balsam, and yellow birch trooped down to high ledges and

looked over. The wash of waters had gouged out solid blocks of stone, had polished off faces of red and white rock with green strata in it, while faults containing iron had rusted away, leaving ferny crevices.

We had lunch at the mouth of the Montreal River, which comes singing down out of the skies through glens of darkest fir.

The eye followed its course back into dreamy defiles between mountains covered with a grand uniformity of green. One cascade I saw leaped straight at the face of a cliff and fell frustrated into a black chasm. The water was colored to umber by the roots of spruce, giving an impression of oracular mystery to the place.

Thence southward to Alona Bay. Every other moment I was saying to myself: What a lake! *What* a lake! No sooner had jagged promontories accustomed you to sternness than you were melted by a sweet, inviting cove. Everywhere the spirit of loneliness brooded in a great, relieving peace. There was no importunity. All was free.

"We've just come back from a trip up the other way," said Mrs. Devlin. "I wish you could have seen Gargantua. There's an uninterrupted range of mountains hundreds of feet high, cut by deep chasms, the cliffs covered with lichens of

every color, with the dearest islands all about. On one of them we picked up a pint of beautiful agates."

"That's the extraordinary thing about the lake," said Devlin. "Some islands are of mass copper, some furnish precious stones, on some there's gold, on others iron, and I'm keeping an eye out for one of solid silver."

Of that day there can be little told of the much that was experienced, for the satisfactions lay like overtones of spirit on the actual deeds. Here was happiness with a far horizon. To look at these people begat little waves of physical well-being, for you felt the elemental health, the poise of their existence. It was late that night, when the boys were asleep, and the lord and lady of the manor and I were sitting by the living-room hearth, that I asked for the beginning of it all.

"It's a very simple story," he said quietly. "I think it had its genesis in our honeymoon on the south shore of Lake Superior. The fascination of these waters and of the bush kept lurking in the backs of both our heads until the opportunity arrived to make a break."

"Your life seems too simple to be true," I said. "Here you carry on the life of rising, bathing, breakfasting, working, playing, reading, and slicing Gordian knots, like the rest of us. Yet it seems different. There is a glamour of freedom

over everything. You choose. You do nothing because it is a fashion. You have time. . . .”

“Ah, would that we had!” said Mrs. Devlin with a comic gesture of despair. “Time loiters in town compared to the scientific speed it achieves here. The days leak away when they do not obviously run. And as for those long winter evenings we thought we were going to have, they’re a myth.”

“When you called us the Superior Family Robinson,” said Devlin, “I was wondering if you thought that all we had to do was rely on providence with the same nonchalance as did our predecessors. There is a Niagara Falls of necessity here. We have to mind the pump, the plow, the parsley, partridges, and the hired persons—to mention the p’s without the q’s and then our plans!”

“At any rate,” I persisted, “you are not playing at life, and you are not being domesticated by life. These two successes are wrapped up in the experiment.”

“It is no longer an experiment,” said Mrs. Devlin, very quietly.

“Then your dream-house has actually been founded on the rock of reality?” I said.

“Beyond any power but death to shake it,” they said, though in less prideful words. . . .

On the next day a black yacht, a handsome bird

of passage, anchored in the bay and discharged cousins and friends from the city. The trail to the mouse-trappists was growing plainer. No wonder, thought I, that these homesteaders do not get lonely, are not "bushed." Company was plentiful indeed, and the supper-table gay. I raised only a dutiful objection to their invitation to stay on, promising myself faithfully to go on the morrow, however.

And go I did, though they will never know the pang it cost me. The boys saw me out the trail, climbing like ibexes, talking of winter's pleasures, the while I thought of their mother and father. Few men had so rational a grip on life as he; few women knew its circle of vicissitudes as she. For three days I had lived with Adam toiling and Eve spinning, talking the poetry of Meredith and getting their reactions on Robert Frost. Enthusiasm, joy, ambition, suffused the hours. Whatever of high things their breeding had begotten, their life had accentuated, and the bush had not broken them to laziness or low ends. They, who enjoyed music, who kept posted on politics, and were determined to see their sons wisely educated, were no malingerers of society. They had decided to know life first-hand, that is all; not to enjoy it vicariously as from a grandstand but to live it wholly, and the fundamentals first. Such add clear waters to the stream of race. Did the Dev-

lins know that I was writing this, they would hold up their hands in protesting laughter, saying, "You make too much of a simple thing." I know the ticklishness of using private doings to adorn a tale. Yet I would be untrue to truth to hide my discovery of some profound common sense, if by the telling somebody here and there be braced. Even to hear of life is fortifying.

I followed my ibexes up that trail, trying to simulate a youth like theirs, and renewing my youth a little in so doing, though it probably took years from my life at the other end. Only once did I sit down and puff, while they continued aloft. Quiet fell. I glanced back and saw, shining far below, the dazzling, illimitable lake. My mind built up an instant's picture of the log houses, the precipice, the cove. I visualized the activities beneath the pines, the pines of Pawatiniki. I believe the solitude was broken with a sigh.

CHAPTER XXII

LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPING

HAVING lived in a world of fish-talk all summer, I had esteemed it a part of my job to see the fisheries. Also I desired to visit some lighthouse folk before the summer simmered away. But my tenacious fancy still centered on Franz and my flight. So from Pawatiniki I went thither, and found another air presumptive, also waiting for the plane.

"When do you think it ought to arrive?" I asked.

"By the day after to-morrow, I think," he said, thinking.

That settled me. "In the history of fanaticism," I said, "there is probably nothing more striking than the faith I have had in the arrival of airplanes. I have nurtured myself on delusion long enough. Good-by."

"Good-by," he said wistfully, watching me climb up the steps of the train and get swallowed by the C. P. R.

Rossport is the chief fishing village on the

North Shore of Lake Superior, and so at Rossport I descended at five of the morning, falling into the very clutches of good fortune. I saw a tug with steam up and found that its owner, Fred Gerow, was about to start on a thirty-mile voyage to his nets, which by the very cream of luck were set near the Lamb Light, to the keeper of which I 'd been given a note by McKirdy.

Having an hour to wait, I climbed the hill. A north wind blew clouds of purple mist out on a varying sea. Summer was over, and I felt a sympathy for the little hamlet which would be exposed to the sinister siege of winter for eight months. The bay was beautiful with wooded islands and curving shores, the village not unpicturesque.

The crew of the *Rossport* filed aboard: two Indians and the three sleep-stricken sons of the owner, aged seven, nine and eleven. To my astonishment, these youngsters managed the engine while the men cast off and tidied up the tug. In fact they performed one task of skill after another during the day, knowing what to do and how to obey father's orders tactfully. They seemed fascinated by the work, as well as frozen. The air was bitter, and I was glad to sit in the pilot-house with Zeno Singleton, a breed of fine appearance.

"I have seen you before," he said at once.

"I cannot imagine where."

"You came down the river in July."

"But I did not see you."

"You were fishing at the White Chute as I passed. Stewart Michel was guiding you. Remember now?"

I dimly remembered a passing canoe. "You ought to be in the detective business," I said.

"I never forget," he said with an easy pride.

That morning passed in a cold splendor. Island after island broke from the vista ahead, neared, grew into a sharp loneliness of firs and coves and towering shores, delighted the imagination, and disappeared. One of them, St. Ignace, is eight miles long and five wide, has fifty lakes on it, rises to fifteen hundred feet, and, because of the natural salt-licks on it, collects the caribou and moose. Mr. George Shiras, Third, the veteran photographer of animals, saw one hundred and fifty moose on this island. But it was only one of scores, probably of hundreds. Between talks with Singleton, I sat in the engine-room with the infants, marveling. At seven, *or* eleven years of age, I could n't turn a steam tug in its tracks or say, "Damn the wind"—with other expletives.

At last we came to the nets, called locally a gang. The nursery crew manœvered the engine while the men dragged up the buoy, attached the fragile-looking net to the engine-run winder.

Gerow leaned over the side with a boat-hook and helped the big lake-trout in. They would be caught in the seven-inch meshes behind the gills, and most weighed ten pounds. Some were still squirming as Singleton disentangled them and threw them into the tub. We obtained only a few. I felt it like a personal disappointment. To see these men and children shivering, to realize that this was their sole source of support, and to imagine such labors, further complicated by October ice and November gales, made me feel like a pampered aristocrat. I thought of my fussier acquaintances, financiers brimming with corpulence, who complain, with querulous sighs, that the lettuce-leaves at lunch are insufficiently crinkled; I thought of the ladies, sitting "Vogue" in hand and working so hard at being idle, who consider servants created just a little lower than the earthworm. Then I looked at these men, cheerful, hard-working, kind; and I determined that we who ride on the backs of labor should at least not wear spurs, and that it might even make us kind and cheerful if we should rouse ourselves from our soft hams to a little labor, too. But of this, of course, I said nothing to my benefactors.

The boys brewed tea at eleven, which we drank in a snow-squall. At one we came in sight of the Lamb Light and blew our whistle, and presently a sail came tacking toward us.

"Then you 'll be out again in three days," I said to Gerow.

"In three days, sure," he said, "unless there 's a blow."

I stepped over the side into the Alexanders' craft. Fred raised the sail; his father managed the tiller, held the sail rope, stowed the cargo, and read my note of introduction; and we soon arrived over a combing sea at the place which was to give me such a complete idea of life in a lighthouse.

It was a little island. On its apex stood a frame dwelling, and from that rose the tower. Three or four acres of bush, a circle of surf on granite, a couple of boats, and you had the scene and the equipment for life on this desolate spot. I wondered what manner of person would choose it. Already I had liked the elder Alexander's voice. It was soft, with a quaver of humor in it occasionally. To maintain humor in the desert betokens a large supply, I thought. His features were spare to leanness, and so were son Fred's. A kindness was obvious in both. The readiness with which they had taken me in showed that hospitality was more than a mere gibbering of formulas in these lands.

You cannot always judge a man by the company he keeps—he often marries too soon. But I found a pattern for lighthouse-keepers' wives in



Photograph by the Author

THE CREW OF THE *Rossport*

Mrs. Alexander, Senior, an energetic, yet comfortable woman. Mrs. Alexander, Junior, a fine-looking girl, also loved the life and passed from housewifery to manning her husband's boat with a cheerful versatility. I settled down to lighthouse-keeping with contentment.

For three days I stayed settled. I romped with the snowbirds and the rabbits, and I planned to write letters. At sundown I went up-stairs with Mr. Alexander and watched him light the light. The view up the Nipigon Straits with their high green palisades, past Fluor Island with its portentous cliffs, or into the blue archipelagos toward the west never failed to stir me. This was the wildest part of Lake Superior. Back in those woods were caribou and wolves. The untouched forest spoke to the heart like a fairy-tale. While to the south stretched the vast expanse of the lake, forever playing variations on the motif of primitiveness.

With the light lit, the job was done, and we would go down and tell tales around the stove. Mr. Alexander had tended this station for a generation and knew all the wrecks, the storms, the drownings, and the different kinds of negligence practised. "We used to have to get out of this scrape alone," he said. "I waited sometimes till Christmas before the ice froze safe. I've been out on the bay with it breaking up under me

before a south wind. It's not a nice feeling, that."

"The government tug tends to you now, does n't it?" I asked.

"After a fashion," and he laughed. "'We'll take you out in the spring,' they say, 'and if you're still alive in the fall we'll take you off.' But they don't bother us much in between."

The more I saw of the profession the less I liked it. No matter how conscientiously one tended the light and cooked and washed and slept, there remained large sections of the day on one's hands in which one could only read or study the weather. Of books and the weather, the latter was the more plentiful. One imaginative lady had supplied the lighthouses with a set of volumes entitled, "How to Avoid Sin," "The Drink Demon," and kindred titles. "The Drink Demon" does well enough to arouse a thirst, but it seems rather cruel to me to arouse one where no alleviation can be procured. If some really helpful soul would send out some literature, some Kipling, or Mark Twain, it would be an appreciated benefaction.

What fed the restlessness in me which kept a normally industrious mind even from taking notes, I cannot tell. But now I understand the zoo hyena better. The north wind prevented us from

going ashore for wood. Possible starvation made it unwise to exterminate the rabbits, which offered the only other chance of amusement. I paced the five-minute trail which the Alexanders had cut across the island; I skinned my shins on the rocks. The night before I was to leave, the elder Alexander shook his head. "Wind to-morrow," he said. "The gulls are collecting." At bedtime the northern lights made an arc of great brilliance across the straits, flooding our island and the dark waters about it with a weird uncertain light, and plunging the lake at our backs into an abyss of blackness, more awful than the Doré pictures of hell's confines. Such despair in the sky was very grand, Miltonic.

My bed was up in the tower, always an airy place. In the night I heard the rain lashing the window, felt the wind putting his shoulder to the tower, and as soon as it was light I ran up to the lookout. That is one advantage of life in a lighthouse; you have a perfect view of the world. Dark squalls were racing from the southeast, and white waves rose, broke, and fell in a smother of confusion. Scud and mist, spray and rain, trees below me bending and recoiling, all contributed to the motion, and when the rhythm of wind and wave corresponded, a breaker would spout spray thirty feet into the driving air. The lake looked the very matrix of storm.

"No boat to-day," said the Alexanders in unison.

"Or no wood-getting, fish-taking, or berry-picking; nothing to do but read 'The Drink Demon' aloud," I suggested, trying to forget that the island was a jail. "What keeps you from going mad, especially when you're alone?"

"This summer weather's a short matter. In November the real blows set in for a week at a time, and in December there's fog. Now, that gets tedious."

"What a doom!" I thought, and suddenly my mind blazed in a resentment at the habits of governments. Here was an intolerable situation, a shanty on a reef outfitted like a cell. There should have been a small library, a victrola, a store of good things to eat, pictures, all the little luxuries possible. The pittance which the keeper received could procure little besides the simple necessities. Two years ago this one had asked for storm-windows: the request was still being deliberated on. I have often wondered why a service like this, or the forest rangers', or the Mounted Police should be treated ungenerously, if not niggardly, when the same voting bodies will set aside large sums for parades and post-disaster investigations. Suppose a senator should receive \$2.75 a day and have to feed himself and a family from that! Yet, in the long



Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

THE BUNGALOW CAMP

run, I think that a forest ranger who preserves Canada's wealth at the source is as valuable to Canada as the average legislator who disburses it. My blood boils, not at government, which any one with even nursery sense knows is as necessary to a people as framework to an office-building, but at the littleness of all governments, which systematically allow the great public services to subsist on the minimum wage while vast sums are squandered on comparative luxuries.

I must say that the Alexanders were a cheerful family, and I kept the semblance of merriment until they got to talking of the man who was to rescue me from their midst.

"Of course," said Fred, "Gerow often has business toward Jackfish and may not come for a week."

"Or even two weeks," said the wives," if we have a spell of weather."

I changed the subject to the more cheerful one of accidents. Alexander the elder had a good memory for all the sinkings of the past forty years. "Naturally," he said, "there's no use turning a boat about for a man overboard in this water. Often, of course, no one's lost for several trips, except maybe a boy now and then."

Presently Mrs. Alexander the younger began to make a cake. It was fascinating to watch her, for she was an artist, going about it the way one im-

provises on the piano, taking a simple motif of flour and sugar, adding variations from the pantry, kneading at a broad *larghetto*, then beating rather *allegro*, and *voilà*, a chocolate nocturne, turned out with the unconcern of perfect art.

I went out in borrowed oilskins to find an appetite and see the storm. I was immediately engulfed in grandeur. The lake, encountered on its own level, was majestic. Great seas of green, as if carved from the heart of a primeval purity, hove high, curled, and dashed against the cliffs in a white fountain of song. What a magnanimity there was in nature! The wind with bursting lungs strove to dislodge me from the rocks, the rocks rose firm from the retreating wave, the wave renewed the onslaught tirelessly, yet there was a deep consanguinity underlying, and I could feel it, too. In fact I think that a man must be touched by some mortal distemper who cannot feel it. He has walked beneath an umbrella too long. Rain, spray, brooks, rivers, lakes, the ocean, surely these are affinities of ours who are ourselves three quarters water. We are imprisoned clouds, and ought to know something of their lightness. We ought to respond to the sun, and to the hurricane. It is no wonder that all of us like to hear the cool sound of running water.

It required the storm to make me surrender to the island life; once surrendered, I found a novel

joy in it. That night the elements combined to efface us from the island, and the tower rocked; but at dawn the west shone clear, and the wind from a new quarter beat down the sullen swell. The rabbits and I sallied forth to look for things, they to the potato-patch which had been scraped together on the rock, I to scan the deep for some sign of my rescuer. But he came not, and I spent my time composing a requiem for his soul in case he had no adequate excuse, foreseeing a to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow creep at this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time.

“Well, how do you like lighthouse-keeping?” asked the genial Alexanders two days later.

“Lots,” I said resolutely; and since this is probably the most perfect and well-rounded lie I ever told, I record it here with some pride.

CHAPTER XXIII

FROM LAMB LIGHT TO PORT ARTHUR

LIFE is admittedly an inferior gift to liberty. It was because I could not control my environment and my hours that I was impatient with my island situation. Intrinsically it was a happy fate. Give me such a lake-washed gem situated in such a wilderness, give me a friend, a book, a typewriter, the same amount of leisure, *and* control of my exits and my entrances, and I should call that green inclosure paradise.

One morning I sprang to the eastern casement, like Bluebeard's final wife, to look for my deliverer—who, I might add for justice' sake, had been delayed by no fault of his—when my heart jumped a full two inches in my breast. I saw smoke. A noble tug was bearing down upon us. Thanks to two barges which it towed, the speed was inconsiderable. I woke them below. "A boat! A sail! What is it, Fred?"

"A gravel-barge," came a sleepy voice.

"Where headed?"

"Port Arthur."

"Would they take me?"

"Sure, if you can catch them in time."

"Can you put me on?"

"Sure, if it is n't too rough."

"Let 's go," I said, dissipated with joy. I threw on what clothes would go on with any facility, put the rest into my duffle-bag, rushed downstairs, grabbed two slices of bread, shook the hands of my wrapperiferous hostesses through opened doors, and tried to pant out my gratitude, which was large and genuine. These good people had put up and put up with a perfect stranger. Money in payment? Not on the North Shore, thanks. Noblesse oblige.

Such progress had we made that we anticipated the tug by a barge-length, and I had time to learn that I was expected to leap from our rowboat to the tug at the precise moment when the wave hove me highest. "And don't miss," added Fred, "for that hawser there 'd cut you quick." Into my startled ken swam the vision of my bloody halves hanging across the hawser, and I began to repent my haste. The tug neared, Fred shouted my desire to the pilot, and, as a wave lifted, said, "Now," to me. I stood, reached for that slippery rail, gripped, pulled, crawled, and stood aboard, safely if not with especial grace. The two Alexanders handed my duffle-bag and the two slices of bread from the summits of successive waves. The lane widened between me and the two kind-

est of men, now headed back to prison. I was free. The bread tasted of freedom; the air, transparent with the North's transparency, smelled of it. And when I climbed to the pilot-house my heels were winged with it. As I climbed I did not know that this day, so unforeseen, was to be one of the perfect days of my life, one of the serene peaks of my many-peaked summer.

A large, bluff, sea-going sort of man was at the wheel. Little by little he revealed himself, standing at last the true figure of affability and thoughtfulness that he was. There seems to be a certain type of man which is the lake's own breed of captain; without a certain force, a certain largeness of personality, he is not Lake Superior's own. In the three captains I got to know I found a striking similarity of character. The horizons had brought them thought; the elements had washed them of littleness; their command had confirmed their strength. Each was superlatively a man.

Captain Taylor got me the chart so that I could follow our course. It lay through that green solitude of islands from Nipigon Straits to Thunder Cape, to which, more often than to any other, my map-reading eyes had turned. For this traverse the day was exactly the right one. The storms had turned the air to crystal, bring-

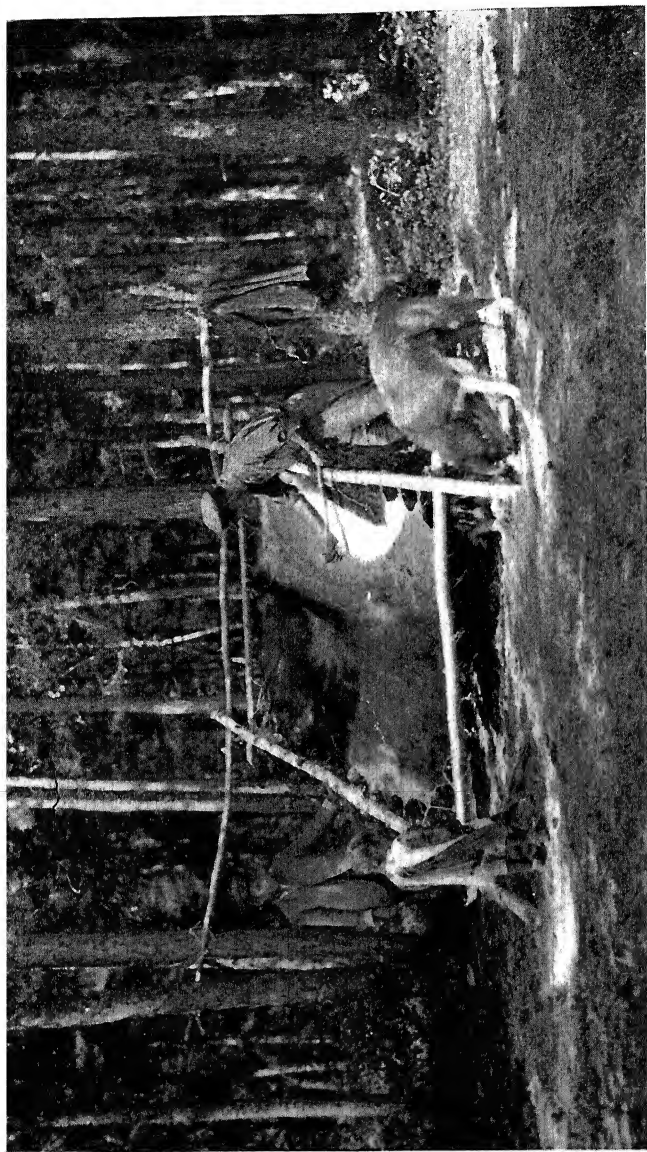
ing far islands near, the near ones apparently close enough to touch. It was such air as might have washed the shores of the white stars; and through it fell a benign sun. The lake was a soft transparent green.

The *S. S. Bronson*, with her two barges, glided hour after hour through the broken maze of islands. Sometimes the passage widened, and I could see thirty airy miles on either hand; sometimes we crept so close to a cliff that the living fervor of the spruces was apparent to the senses. Past Black Dock, past little Magnet, past Porphyry, we slid, and the mate Charlton, relieving Captain Taylor, pointed out the trout streams and the coves that could be relied on for caribou. The voyage through these enchanted islands, flung down on the northwest, lifted me like a great symphony concert. Here was a principality, indeed, for those whose wealth is beauty and whose inspiration plays from the source which never can run dry. These passages and fiords, these bays and ramifying brooks, were too numerous to be discovered, too remote to be spoiled, too sundered to be burned, too rich to be exhaustible. We glided, glided, noiselessly through winding channels, where the sunlight lay like green snow on fields of waving green, and my fairest dream was coming true.

Frenchy came into the pilot-house. I suppose

he was eighteen, a gamin descended from those of Victor Hugo, clothed rather ill-fittingly in western ways. He lounged against the door and talked, regaling us with anecdotes which it would have driven O. Henry mad to note down. Unfortunately I listened not only breathless but pencilless, and anyway I could not have used them. He had run away with a visiting circus and had wandered over the States smelling out misadventure with an infallible nose. Most of his byways of adventure ended in the cul-de-sac of a pair of arms. Like most chaps who approach their amours as they do their meals, he had no regard for girls—and no disdain. These roving youngsters who are so ready to share their pennies or their persons have a philosophy rather kinder than many of the saintly married. But I dare say their insouciance lasts only a short while, with their vigor, and at best they are gargoyles of lovers. Frenchy himself showed how humorously perilous a business this sparrowy promiscuity can be, for the boy wanted to learn the compass from Charlton; he absolutely could not master it, not from lack of native wit, but from lack of perseverance. The fiber of ambition had been kissed out of him, and here he was, destined to climb up his monkey-rope of life a grinning deck-hand, a limp cigarette of a man.

The meals on the tug *Bronson* were served



Courtesy of F. A. Waugh & Canadian Geological Survey

under the auspices of one from the Celestial Empire, and right well did they become their source. We emerged from supper to find ourselves sliding by Silver Islet and approaching Thunder Cape. Behind, Black Bay, a wild inviting stretch of water, ran inland forty miles. Thunder Cape is the greatest sight of Lake Superior. It is a vast promontory of colored stone rising nearly as high as the famous Cape Eternity from forest-grown abutments of splintered rock. There, at the entrance to Thunder Bay, sleeps the giant turned to stone. At dawn, at dusk, by the noon sun or the midnight moon, this majestic Sphinx of the North lies on its great paws and stares into the southern distances. It is keeping the secret of the wilderness unto the day when all secrets shall be known. From afar it seems a cloud of color solidified. Nearer, it stands over one, high, massive, and eternally impressive in that great solitude. It is the retreat of Nani-boujou, and as I gazed at its portentous bulk, dark against a growing sunset, I thought it better to sprinkle a little tobacco over the boat's side, too, so that his calumet might not go out while he was in the happy hunting-grounds. In the wideness of the world there is room for all our greatest; that evening's sight of the purple, towering portal to the bay is gathered with my most impressive memories.

The setting for our entry was of imperial splendor. A cloth of curious light lay on the water. On one hand Pie Island with its vales and turrets rising from a luminous mist shone with the dying light, on the other the great shadow of the cape became a cold and singing purple, while ahead a cloud curtained the west, hinting at hidden glories finer still. None but a fool would have had moments like these endure; and, worn with the day's vast beauty, I was heartily glad when the glow left the cloud summits to the darkness of approaching storm.

We crossed the bay in quietness, the pilot-house dark, the better to see the buoy lights. We anchored one barge in the harbor and by midnight had manœvered the other as close to shore as possible. Again regretful good-byes, and then I leaped from the tug across a dark cleft to the barge which was supposed to touch the dock, and the *Bronson* backed away to spend the night at anchor.

But there 's many a slip twixt the shore and the ship. When I 'd crawled over the gravel I saw the shore, but also an avenue of blackness some fifteen feet wide between. The crew were busy. They had been up since four, and I could not suppose that my fate affected them much. I asked if there was a boat on the barge. They pointed to one tied to the dock. It had just

ferried a man ashore—for the night. I roamed over the gravel, ruminating. With a good jump I could scarcely get half-way to shore. Yet how utterly abominable to curl up on that gravel fifteen feet from comfort. A man touched my arm.

“We can put you ashore on that if you like,” and he pointed to a means.

“All right,” I said, “I like.”

You’ve seen those grappling-iron mouths that bite up gravel and, swinging it on a griffin neck, spit it out? Well, there was one of these animals asleep on the barge. I deposited my duffle in the beast; then I climbed on. He raised his head slowly, swung it jerkily like a nodding dromedary, and started. I clung to him while he held me over the barge’s side, over the inky deep, over a mound of gravel below. He gritted his teeth, and I jumped. He spat my duffle on the pile. I looked up into the black heaven whence we had fallen and wished I could give him a lump of sugar. With a rheumatic clank his jaws closed and the blind beast swung back to his gravel bed. I shouldered my worldly goods and strode off, calling it a day.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN ASIDE IN ARCADY

“**S**UPPOSE,” I thought, after I’d read the telegram for the third time, “suppose I were to wake in a neat cabin faintly odorous of cedar. Suppose that outside the walls grew tall firs and birches golden with autumn and the morning sun, and that the fourth side opening on a porch disclosed a lake, a lake with some name so lovely that it would be a poem just to say it, a lake below a cascade of mossy ledges, glittering in a distance that was dappled with islands, the islands green and comfortable with trees.

“And suppose,” I continued, being pleased with the supposition, “that as I dressed from my plunge in this lake, I passed along the wild terrace and came shortly to a bungalow with a fire laid on the hearth, a table set by the fire, a cloth and chaste silver and a small jar of marmalade on the table, and a waitress in waiting by its side. And suppose a person who had made inn-keeping her art, who wore something refreshing to see, even if you had no idea what it was, whose dark hair had the least wave in it, whose eyes the tini-

est sparkle, and whose voice was used to saying kind things—suppose such a person were there to breakfast with. And afterward,” I continued, “I should return to the cabin, already cared for, and I should work upon the *Corona*, having only to look out of the window to see passages of blue water between the islands, work until the sun shone past a certain birch and I was free.

“Then suppose,” thought I, warming, “that I could find a boy to paddle bow, and fond of fishing, and not over-fond of talk, for writing through a morning is almost my fill of intercourse; and suppose that we should sail exploring down among the islands, landing on the sunniest, most sheltering one to swim, and that we should catch some un-supposable fish, and so returning, dress for supper.”

“And finally,” thought I, “suppose there should be the banquet, with a party of eight, a great fire on the hearth, and talk and music and much forgetfulness in laughter, and hovering through the enjoyment the dearest supposition of all, which would be that these mornings and afternoons and banquet evenings would go on and on until I should have finished what I had come to finish by the lake with a name so lovely that it would be a poem just to say it.”

And supposing all this to myself, I smoothed

out the crumpled telegram and read it for the fourth time:

Where is that long promised tale? Hoping you are well and enjoying yourself.

A. D. MOORE.

It was the morning after I had been dropped on the gravel-heap by the nodding dromedary. I was still in bed, for it was only dawn, but that wretched wire had wakened me and demanded consideration. Now, Mr. Moore is an excellent friend of mine, and he edits an excellent paper for boys, for which I write ex—actly as I wish. Of course that is the secret of being a successful editor. By apparently giving him his freedom, the editor keeps the simple author happy and purring and satisfied with absurd little prices. For the true author is a child of the wild, a literary Indian. La Hontan's remark about the redskins holds equally true for him: "They are very careful in preserving the Liberty and Freedom of their Heart, which they look upon as the most valuable Treasure upon Earth; from whence I conclude that they are not altogether so savage as we are."

The situation was acute. I must write my friend editor a story, this would take at least ten days. I wanted to write it in a place of beauty, ease, and wildness, so that something of

the environment might soak into the pages. And so I lay there supposing the very scene I desired. And then something happened. Bird-Who-Flies-in-the-Fog, which is the Ojibway for Inspiration, flew into my room, perched on the footboard of the bed, and commenced to advise me. "Were I you," she said, "I wouldn't be such a fool. Will you never learn from experience? You know you found wildness and ease and beauty at the other bungalow camps. You know that the Canadian Pacific has erected still a third by a lake with a name so lovely that it is a poem just to say it. Why don't you go hide there and write for this modern Mr. Moore who desires to dictate times and limits to me?"

"At any other season, I should enjoy exploring a lake with a name so lovely, et cetera," said I, "but at present it happens that I wish to go boating with the Stewarts and Miss Black, and I have as good as promised Naniboujou that I shall not leave his lake again."

"If you desert your duty," said Bird-Who-Flies-in-the-Fog, severely, "I shall leave you without a flutter. I have spoken."

So she had, that was obvious; for when I tried to put her suggestion out of mind I felt a subtle distress, and finally I sallied down to the station and in desperation took the train for the lake with a name. . . .

It was the end of the day. The last lines which I had read were these:

DUKE. Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life, exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

AMIENS. I would not change it. Happy is your
Grace
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune
Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

The little boat had wound its way across the glittering lake and into a distance that was dappled with islands, the islands green and comfortable with trees. As we rounded the last, the five-thousandth it seemed, I saw a cascade of mossy ledges topped with a low bungalow among birches golden with autumn and the evening sun. We stopped, and I followed a youth with my duffle-bag up the trail. "You will find Mrs. Betts there," he said, and he pointed to a person who was dressed in something refreshing to see, I had no idea what, and whose dark hair, I noticed as she approached, had the least wave in it, whose eyes the tiniest sparkle, and whose voice gave the impression of being accustomed to saying only kind things.

"You would like a cabin with a view?" she said, and, passing along a wild terrace, we came shortly to a little bungalow with a porch that disclosed the lake between tall firs.

"That will be yours. I hope you will find inspiration here."

"I 'd be a dull clod not to," I said fervently.

"Supper will be at seven."

"I trust it is a banquet," I said suddenly, "with a fire on the hearth, and a party of eight, and talk and music and—"

She started. "That is curious," she said; "you make the eighth—very curious."

"Not quite curious," I said, "where everything is *just* right."

"It is so nice of you to say so," she said, withdrawing. And I went inside. It was a neat new cabin, faintly odorous of cedar. As I took my Corona out of the case and put it on the little table, laying beside it some fresh blank typewriter paper, I heard a rustle, a flutter, a small still voice near the footboard of the bed, and looking I discovered Bird-Who-Flies-in-the-Fog. "I told you so," she said.

The work, preceded by a plunge in the spicy water and by a quiet breakfast beside a quiet fire on the hearth, served by a quiet maid on a little table laid with chaste silver and a small jar of

marmalade—the work went famously. It was a pirate story. Villains of a fantastical villainousness swaggered out of the fir wood at my elbow and put themselves at my service. Boy heroes contracted for and carried through jobs of daring which succeeded each other vehemently. The ocean growled or smiled at my pleasure, and a world of treasure disclosed itself to give an ending as happy as a marriage service. And then when the sun shone past a certain birch I was free.

O happy moment! I would saunter down to the boat after lunch and find John Noble, who during those days made me a supple pal, a pal fond of fishing, and not over-fond of talk, and who had an undying fancy for exploration. We caught our fill of unsupposable fish and then hunted up a fresh island where the sun shone warm on a slanting rock; and there we 'd strip and think about going in. Sometimes they were long thoughts, for frost had had his finger in the water. But in we went at last, and after the rub-down what a song the body sang! And we 'd have a pipe, or at least I would, for I 'm not going to give Johnny away; and we 'd lie there beneath those golden birches by a golden fire in an Indian summer of body and mind; and then, returning, dress for supper.

It was a banquet always. The chef was a man

of pride, and Mrs. Betts, hostess of this Devil's Gap Camp, was an artist in hospitality. She combined comfort with freedom from fuss as only a lover of ministration could. From servants, from guests, she drew the very best, and during our era the atmosphere of the camp was as restful and goldenly calm as the astonishing days outdoors. For Indian summer had come to the Lake of the Woods. Each morning dawned with a pearl-like radiance. The body of each day was gold and blue. Nature observed the profound hush, the spiritual quiet, which was her thanksgiving for the season of sun and fruitage at an end, her time of preparation for the season of snow and fortifying cold to come. Each evening was a chorale in color. Each night the perfect benison.

The house-party was composed of a set of variations on the tune of our common enthusiasm for nature, her works, and this purlieu in particular. John Noble and his father represented Illinois and the extremes of piscatory zeal. Their dreams were rounded with a bass, so he be big enough. Ralph Allan McKinney and his wife respectively furnished tales of exploration and song. Neither smudges nor the wettings of the wilderness had hurt Mrs. McKinney's voice, and I wish that Rachmaninoff could have seen the lake's setting for that loveliest of songs, "When

Night Descends." Miss Victoria Hayward of Bermuda and Miss Edith S. Watson from Connecticut completed the table. These little ladies were gradually revealed as the intrepid voyageurs. They had dipped into Canada and had brought up all manner of charming things from thistly places. They had turned out a volume called "Romantic Canada," which was almost as large as they were. It was filled with the distillation of romance, Miss Watson's photographs of spindle-folk and fishermen and the like being reinforced by Miss Hayward's interpretative pen. This friendship was delightful to see, for the ladies suited each other like the covers of a book; yet here affinity did not cloy, for they were ever exchanging gentle banter, as well as supplying the springs of our conversation with bubbles of wit. This, then, was the party which sped the evening hours.

It was the last afternoon, the story was done, and Bird-Who-Flies-in-the-Fog had flown off remarking that she was going to take a considerable rest. Johnny had gone. Indian summer was about over, the gold leaves now a curled and rusty brown gliding here and there on the water. I took the canoe and paddled nonchalantly toward some new islands. There were always some new islands to paddle toward. Lake of the Woods

contains twenty thousand islands, some one told me. I believe the Government told him. Whether the Government exaggerated by a thousand or two does not matter greatly. I feel pretty sure that I saw nineteen thousand five hundred during my stay, and most of these, in fact, all of these but a handful near Kenora, were virgin, absolutely camp-free. Lake of the Woods, Kámnitic Sakáhagan, as the Ojibways say, captivated me and my fancy. Lacking the size and strength of that great sea, Superior, and lacking the variety of beauty and wildness of Lake Nipigon, it had an exquisite feminine charm which elevated it to a place near those.

It was on this afternoon that I had my unmeeting with Ralph Connor. When I had heard that there summered here this sincere writer whose honest fame had come down from the north to me while I was still a boy reading "Glen-garry School Days" and "The Sky Pilot" and "Black Rock," I wished to see what manner of man he was, feeling that any one who had the perspicacity to choose a home among these enchanted islands must be open-hearted enough to welcome a fellow of his craft even if not of his achievement. So I scouted among the isles and found him. The look of it reassured me. Boats, sails, paddles, outdoor equipment for a father with many sons, filled the dock. A roomy house with a

tower outlook was surrounded by trees. I asked the evidently Mrs. Gordon if the doctor was in, and she directed me to seek him across the island on a tennis-court. That was a heavenly walk. It is hard to stretch one's legs at Lake of the Woods, and this trail, winding along between the white birches, was rustly with gold, was topped with gold and branching ivory, with flecks of gold like winging bits of sunshine moving with the breeze, and everywhere white vistas down the wood. Once I came to an island of poplars in the forest of birch, still untouched by the frost, their sensitive leaves a lilting green against the lyric blue of sky. All was the supreme of delicacy and of frail beauty, and yet to keep it from being too frail there rose that smell of stirred brown leaves from the good earth. To live long on this island, to write on such an island, I thought, were to become a Maurice Hewlett, a Pierre Loti, a Lafcadio Hearn, a singer of some strange Arcady not yet frequented by our poets.

I heard voices near the end of the trail, and I stole up not wishing to disturb. I had no trouble in recognizing my man, tall, rather large-boned, frank-faced, and holding up his end of the tennis game against some athletes of college age. It was fast and straightforward that game, and the Rev. Dr. Gordon was perspiring as less distinguished men have sweat at pitching hay. The

boys spared him not because he happened to be the author of a dozen best sellers. I would no more have interrupted that game than I would have interrupted Ben Jonson while composing a drinking-song to some lady's eyes. I did n't need to interrupt. The strong and able writer was in those strokes. His wholesomeness was in those sons. His authorship was faithful to himself; to interview him I need only go home and reread "The Man from Glengarry." So I turned and tiptoed back, launched my canoe noiselessly, and floated off, better satisfied than with many an actual meeting.

I left the Lake of the Woods with the subtle inner bewailment one would have on departing from the Hesperides' bright gardens. It had been however, a rounded and a golden time. Kámnitic Sakáhagan's green islands, her maze of passages and her inviting streams, were forever more to me than a poetic name. She was a poem. And as the boat withdrew me from her presence I said over those lines, read when entering it, changing but one word:

Happy is the place
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune
Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PASSING OF THE CRAZY BESS

“YES, she ’s not bad,” said Charles Edward Stewart, helping in his wife, but speaking of the motor-launch. “She ’s a pretty good boat.”

“She ’s beautiful,” said Miss Black, “but can you boss her?”

“She has the gift of being persuaded,” said Mr. Stewart, the gallant.

Indeed, the *Arawana* was beautiful while quiescent and superb in action, a slim craft, about thirty feet long, with the strength of many horses in her bosom. Mrs. Stewart had manufactured a canvas cabin to fit, and inside had been stored enough food to feed a navy, which caused Miss Black to say to me, “Whatever they intend to do to us in the way of sinkings or other exposure, we are not expected to famish.”

Behind us was tied a flat-bottomed, square-hipped rowboat to serve as a spare in case we went down.

“Name? Well, I don’t know that we ever thought of a name for her,” said Mrs. Stewart. “You see there ’s only one of her.”

"She certainly is a spinster," said Miss Black, "with neat but old-fashioned lines, a subdued gaiety, and still a twinkle in her starboard eye. I think we ought to christen her *Betsy Trotwood*. . . ."

"With the first bottle of pickle that we open," added her male parent. And so it came about, though the name, being too long, became successively *Miss Trotwood*, *Betsy*, and *Crazy Bess*, as her true nature was divulged.

The Kaministiquia, like Cerberus, has three mouths; and from one of them we debouched upon Thunder Bay, our skipper's hat blowing off as the wind's last warning. It was glorious mid-September with a stiff northwest breeze. Had not Mr. Stewart known his *Arawana*, and had we not known Mr. Stewart, we had been fools indeed to rush out where angels would have got a soaking. Beyond the breakwater a high sea was running, but in our favor, and as the captain assured us that if we achieved the first point without swamping, we could continue down the sheltered west coast, we in turn assured him that we were with him and would stay so. Accordingly we put nose to sea.

The choicest flowers of adventure grow in the thickest danger, and I cannot help being enough of a fatalist to believe that, if a man use what wisdom is in him, there also lies his truest safety.

The perils that await in our appointed direction are not half so perilous as the fears that stay us from it, and they can be disregarded in the difficult matter of choosing that direction. Conversely, it seems genuine cowardice to me to refuse safety when one's direction is not changed by the acceptance.

That morning was the arena of a glorious contest in the skies, Michi *versus* Kitchi Manitou. For a few minutes Michi Manitou would have the upper hand. A high black cloud would fall upon the lake, delivering a universal bruise of wind, the waves leaping and showing their teeth like Michi's dogs. Then Kitchi would assert his power; the sun would race past us, driving the purple rain beyond the horizon's rim; and green waters would laugh beneath green skies. Now Thunder Cape wore a violet robe; now reared above the clouds, serene in sun, the Ojibway Olympus. Pie Island's magnificent battlements grew faint, faded from view, and floated back to place. Fort William's mountain lifted its antique promontory into these purple ranks with a dignity beyond its height, and southward streamed the mountains, cloud-assailed, which were to keep us company down the lake. I was glad that wind and my host's willingness took us southwestward, for it was still a region unviewed. And I was glad that the women of our party were

so able for adventure. Ordinarily one must accept woman as one accepts the weather: when she is fine, she is heaven's blue itself; when she storms, she is of a sprightly active interest to a student of the race; it is useless to storm in return and unwise to argue. But now and then happens a woman whose plane of life lies above the superficial squall, one equipped with a humor to gild any cloud, whose temper is as serene, as refreshing, and as sweepingly powerful, too, as the prevailing westerlies. They can usually cook well also. Such were the women on the *Arawana*; and, being such, they jested during the misadventures of our cruise, and made those misadventures halcyon to remember. The first of these was now on us.

After a long embroilment in Michi-Manitou's windy rumpus, we had put into Sturgeon Bay for lunch. It was a place of mountain privacy. Here the range rose a thousand feet in palisades of green, and embraced the cove. And here we feasted. Indeed, we feasted with such fidelity to the occasion as not to notice that the gusts which managed to find their way from the heights and the ruinous contention of the gods above were driving the *Arawana* deeper into the clay bottom. The engine could not start her, nor our pushings budge. This was ignominy. To start on a proud voyage and be spitted on a clay bank twenty miles

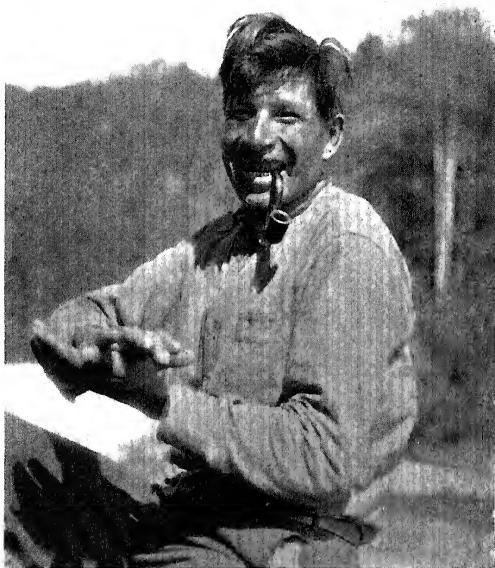
from home was an abrupt and pitiful end for a perfect day. Charles Edward and I hopped into the water.

The situation began to look serious. The lake was too cold to go grubbing around in it indefinitely, and the boat seemed so fast aground that all the king's horses plus the royal auto-trucks might even prove inadequate. Yet it was unthinkable that we should stay there forever. I firmly believe that this unthinkableness was the sole reason why we did not stay.

"That last pole helped," said Mrs. Stewart; "one straw more and you 'll break the camel's back."

"Yes, but which camel?" said Miss Black. "There 's this, though: the boat will grow lighter meal by meal."

We cut a few more birch-staves, and finally, by uniting intellect, will, and passion in a supreme effort, we moved her half an inch. Then an inch. And then into an appropriate depth of water. We dragged ourselves on board. I was tired, dripping, cold; but our renewed coherent progress counteracted all these feelings, and soon I forgot them in the flying wonder of the next two hours. For a truce had been called above. Michi stalked off to Minnesota, and Kitchi Manitou resumed his blandness. As we glided down the coast the sun centered on Pie Island, at any hour one of the



Photograph by H. Armstrong Roberts

"ALL'S JAKE"

striking islands of the world, but in that level light sublime. Its fluted columns of rock, Yosemite-high, glowed with an old and golden splendor and seemed as of some ancient cathedral softened with immemorial ivy. This was Earth-song at the grandest.

“For Pirates Only”—and not mere bedraggled pirates with only an eye for avarice, but pirates descended direct from Robin Hood and the more gentlemanly abettors of the high-sea trade—such was the obvious use of the cove into which we put for the night. It was preposterously picturesque, this crescent of clear water, sheltered from lake wind by a toy island, from other winds by forest and hill. There was a bare ledge to which we fastened our fleet, a curving beach piled high with fire-wood, a mossy bank for sleeping-quarters, and the whole crystal urn of day filled with a fading fire.

“Let’s do something that’s never been done before on a camping trip,” I suggested. “Instead of making beds, meals, or plans, let’s sit and watch and enjoy life.”

“What a novel idea!” exclaimed Mrs. Stewart.

“But well to try once,” said Miss Black. “Possibly half an hour might not turn us into incurable idlers.”

And it came about that we did sit before a little fire, washing our minds in the autumn clarity of

that sky, watching the firs and spruces on the toy island burn in ruddy undestroying fire, and joining hands spiritually as we listened to the soundless vespers of nature the tremendous. It does not pay to be provident. We might have wasted that unforgettable scene in vain preparations for enjoyment. We are all in danger of postponing our happiness forever. There is a wealth of everything in peace of mind, and peace of mind depends not on the morrow but on the now. When the time came it was easy to cook by lantern-light, and as fascinating to blow out the lantern and have our supper by candle-light in an alcove of the forest as in a banquet-room. We even left the dishes for the morning, at which wretched disclosure all good housekeepers will throw up their hands and lose their place in this book.

I am sure that my partners would never forgive me if I omitted mention of their singing from this log. True, there was no applause, no ticket of admission, no running afterward to catch the suburban local, none of those things by which a concert is known, and which, in the city, quite overshadow the music. But let them not feel that the vocal hour was wasted. I did *not* sleep, my friends. I concede that at times your whinnying sounded afar off, that the harmonious numbers rose and quavered, like a musical mirage, over the

true scale. But to one inured to modern composition this were nothing, and I attribute to other causes the fact that, during the hour, so many stars above leaped from their places and slid to other skies.

September, we had been warned, was no boating month, but I hope I shall never be so credulous as to believe my ears. September is a month, sometimes, of rapid changes, but the water will drown one as readily in July. For fools there is no boating month, while for those who are willing to be careful September hath charms. Our journey was to prove both sides of this equation beyond the power of almanacs. We had no sooner done breakfast, routed the *Crazy Bess* from her bed (she had filled during the night, and sunk), and issued from our pirate cove behind Victoria Light than a neutral-tinted cloud controlled the southwest and hinted that we had best hug the shore. We passed Pigeon Point and were in United States waters, and arrived at Grand Portage, where much history is concealed. Here it was that the great mud-and-water route to Lake of the Woods began, the arduous arc of that vast circle of the voyageurs which took in Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay. It was a grand portage, indeed, and the wiry lads must have cursed when they saw Mount Josephine rearing before them. Every pound had to be hoisted over this range

fifteen miles to where the watershed of the Rainy River begins. Here doubtless are relics buried, and many a memory and tale can be unearthed. When Egypt gets thoroughly dug up, the excavators might move here. At present Grand Portage is an Indian reservation. The whitewashed houses were picturesque against the green, and it was a unique pleasure to set foot on one's own country from outside without the customary molestations.

The afternoons seemed set apart for our misadventures. A rain had fallen, but the cloud had lightened and the thirst of progress was on us. Isle Royale lay twenty miles to sea, and thither we set out, making our way between roving islands of fog. We had not crossed half-way, however, before the sun died; a thin lower cloud parted like a theater curtain and revealed a livid sinister thunder-cloud. To turn was to run into it. To go on was to nose into the opposing wind. In either tactic lay a reasonable assurance of being drowned.

It was well that we had not merely darlings aboard, but women. A coy glance would have been an inappropriate challenge to the Jovian frown that hovered over Minnesota, a maidenly sigh but poor response to the hurricane collecting. These, on the other hand, were cool, busy with fastening down the curtains, donning ward-

robes, seeing that the *Crazy Bess* was secured. If Miss Black, who with me had found it hard to believe anything good of motor-boats before we met the *Arawana*, found it still harder to visualize ourselves crawling into the *Bess* in mid-ocean from a sinking launch, no paleness told her just doubts.

The storm now reared to strike. Ahead of us lay the light providently called Rock of Ages, to which we were setting our course. An increasing wind blew from the southeast. Green waves with cold blue lips either made faces at us as they passed or flung themselves into ours. A vast rumble behind announced that the machinery of annihilation was working. A dim, unmanning light closed us in. I have seen many thunderstorms, but none that looked so deliberately direful.

And now, with a cosmic crash, there began a parody on the end of the world. A wind, marshaling all its powers, set about beating down the opposing waves, and incidentally wiping from the face of the deep any incidentals such as we. From the heights of blue behind streamed systematic rivers of fire which seemed to be incinerating the counties of Minnesota one at a time. Rain, cold as a dead moon, suddenly roared from above. It shut out the Rock of Ages, formed a quivering cell in which place and direction were

lost. But it dulled the lightning. It could not dull the thunder, which collapsed upon us in wall-like thuds of sound. Charles Edward Stewart sat calm. I warmed myself at the pump. The *Arawana* struggled like a living being. It was fine to see her put her shoulder to a gray wave, push, strive, and, when thrown back, recover her course with that palpitant heart of hers, steady, steady. I existed. There was no thinking, no doing possible. In the marvelous arena of wind and water, fire and sound, it was possible only to record the splendor, to thrill as violence annihilated violence about us, while we, four erect if tiny spirits, sitting in our chrysalis wrappings of the flesh, awaited the outcome of the titanic play.

Sometimes Nature achieves a grand art, and on our afternoon she minded her construction like a playwright. We had now arrived at the climax. A terrific bolt of lightning shriveled up the heavens in front of us, forty towers of Babel fell in one last resplendent crash, the purple curtain behind thinned, and we knew that it was over. The sun cleaved a way through the clouds, and we could imagine the Ancient of Days smiling at us and our fears, and saying: "What of it all? I have labored to make this loveliness and must have my little relaxation. And what is death but a passing joke of mine, the cream of the jest,

really? You shall not forfeit the least of your loves. And see how everything is clean again."

And oh, it was! Everything was steeped in fresh beginnings. Close ahead rose the Isle, still a dazzling green, for autumn had not crossed the water; and above it arched a rainbow, dabbling its feet in lilac waves and resting its head against the sleepy thunder. The Rock of Ages still stood. We rolled up the curtains.

"How do you feel?" we asked.

"Bruised but happy," said the ladies.

"If ever I live through this trip," said I, "it will be to write the praises of the *Arawana*."

"Not forgetting *Crazy Bess*," said Mrs. Stewart, and at the word we turned to look at our little playmate. We stared, with a wild surmise, on vacancy. She simply was n't there.

"Alas!" cried Miss Black, "gone to be an infant derelict forever?"

"And she never knew completely what we thought of her," remarked Charles Edward.

"She was a good boat," said his wife. "If you took sufficient pains in getting into her you need not positively be upset."

"A tolerably kind view," whispered Miss Black to me, who is more practical than elegiac.

I considered it too soon after the obsequies to be truthful, and so said, looking severely at my partner, "I feel very queerly off without her,

bumping and bobbing so cheerfully, and requiring to be bailed not oftener than once an hour. A person must indeed be without a trace of sympathy or religion who can refuse *Miss Trotwood* a tear."

"It is as well that one of us remain dry," replied Miss Black, pointedly scanning my garments, which were adding to the store of water in the boat with every moment.

Thus amicably palavering, we sailed into the safety of Washington Harbor, an inlet of translucent green projecting into Isle Royale for three miles, and I entered unaware into another stronghold of beautiful delight.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ISLE ROYALE

I HESITATE to write about Isle Royale with the enthusiasm that I feel, for enthusiasm, they say, is contagious, and contagion is the very thing I should like to spare the place. Were I to write as I would of the Isle, every reader would drop the book and ring for his boat. Even what I shall say I ask the reader to forget as quickly as convenient, and on no account to tell anybody else.

In the first place, the name is suitable. I am not the only one to object to the almost infallible unsuitability of designations in America. Elliott Cabot, who voyaged with Louis Agassiz on Lake Superior in 1848, says, "There seems to be about this continent some pervading obstacle to the giving of reasonable names to places." Pie Island, for example. Who but a pudding-head would have belittled that vast dignity of soaring stone with such a name? As well call Cologne Cathedral Custard Church. But in naming Isle Royale some man not altogether poetry-proof hit it, for this shard of a continent becalmed in the green

fresh-water sea is indeed royal, sovereign, isolate, supreme.

Isle Royale is shaped like a battle-ship, fifty miles long and ten amidships, and is accompanied by a fleet of destroyers, little islands swimming by its bow, and the whole squadron engaged on a northeast course in a progress of illusion. It protects a few summerers from hay-fever and supports a handful of fishermen, three or four of whom and a game-warden winter there; but the age-long repose of the isle is scarcely broken by these, and we saw no one stirring, heard no one as we chugged up that exquisite arm of the lake. I felt ashamed for the *Arawana's* slight sound. Nothing but a canoe should have intruded there.

In the farthest corner we found a club-house hidden, and on seeking to buy gas discovered one solitary clubman brooding beside a fire capable of barbecuing a steer. He invited us to steam ourselves by his flames, and while we did so he recounted history. A British company, stimulated by a report of minerals, had bought up most of the island decades ago, and erected this house.

"An enigma of archæology," continued Mr. Barnum, "centers on Isle Royale, where certainly a prehistoric race once lived. Copper was mined here, and not by the Indians. A Mr. Ferguson of Pennsylvania stumbled on a prehistoric city's remains last fall and is coming back to complete his

search. He found the ancient copper workings, the pits, still recognizable though overgrown with century-old timber. They employed the old way of mining by lighting fires on the rock and then pouring cold water on the hot stone."

"You think that the Indians were incapable of mining?" asked Mr. Stewart.

"The Indians were afraid to come here," said Miss Black. "There 's quite a tale about the trouble in the 'Relations of the Jesuits.' Father Dablon writes about some Ojibways who came here to camp and remained to collect copper. They were about to be off with it when they heard a voice saying, 'Who are these who would steal the playthings of my children?' Their greed, however, was rather in advance of their godliness, and they got away with it, but they gave up the ghost shortly after in quick succession. Father Dablon remarked at the end of the letter, 'Some think that the voice was that of Missibizi, others that of Memogovissimos.' Whichever it was, it kept them from Isle Royale."

"Poor Indians!" I said. "They 're always being inhibited. They were out of luck on Michipicoten Island, too."

"It 's a good thing for the United States that Ben Franklin was n't superstitious," continued Mr. Barnum. "I 've just laid down a fine article in 'The Dearborn Independent' by Richard Haste

who says that he remembered these rumors of copper—he studied the Indians, you know—and stipulated that the northern boundary of our country should pass north of this place. Careful Ben! Nothing escaped him. It was during the California gold excitement when there was also a copper excitement in Michigan that this British company came here, built its docks and light-houses, sank shafts, and erected villages, and crashed in fifty-seven.”

“Another narrow squeak for royalty,” said Miss Black. “I hope the United States will buy this island and turn it into a park. It is too beautiful to mine or lumber, burn or turn into a cheap tourist resort.”

“What has kept the tourist away so long?” I asked.

“It must be Memogovissimos,” said Miss Black.

“Or Missibizi,” added Mrs. Stewart with a laugh.

Mr. Barnum kindly offered us sleeping-quarters, but we did not want to break the outdoor spell, so, embarking once more on the now unaccompanied *Arawana*, we sailed down the green fiord a little way and slept off the sound of thunder in our ears.

An island appeals to us, I believe, because there is something in us that craves form. A continent

is inspiring but ungraspable. In Isle Royale I was to find a miniature continent and an island in one. This was the fundamental secret of its fascination for me. But within this unity lay the widest and most exquisite variety. Its wildness, its mysterious history, its isolation, completed the spell, and during the next day of crystal brightness, when we poked about the fiords in exploration, Miss Black put the thing into words, saying, "When Moses was climbing Sinai, those copper workers were busy back of Siskiwit Bay here."

"Yes, and maybe before that," added Skipper Stewart, "in those early days when Cain and Abel were enjoying family discussions, these people were drawing water and catching fish."

"I 'm avid to find a stone hammer," said Miss Black, suddenly.

"You shall have one," said Mr. Stewart.

We had come around the stern of the battleship island, past bleak shores and spruce-studded points and great rocks that were red and orange with lichen, and had entered Siskiwit Bay. On little Siskiwit we found the place where an old dock had been, and a scar of an old road was to be traced, though more by the naturalness of its leading than by any eagle-sightedness on our part. At its end had been the old island mine. Here, in our grandfathers' youth, had stood a family of buildings incident to the birth and growth of a

village, store, church, school-house, and all. Tracks of a deer wandered in the doorway of a green cellar. In the winter that deer would be in danger of the wolves. There are moose, too, on the island, and the fur-bearers. But we found no stone hammers.

We explored in a leisurely way, entering Rock Harbor by an old lighthouse, and riding for ten miles between surge-scarred islands and the main isle's solemn shores. Mr. Barnum had directed us to a beach where the chlorastrolite, a green stone, is found; the only place, he said, in the world. But we did not feel like grubbing for gems. "Let them lie," we said; "we are laden with memories." We sailed, hypnotized by beauty. Fiords grew into tiny cañons, promontories shook a stark fist into the three hundred miles of storm-scape, only to melt into meadows, which in turn became forests of closely ranked fir. Capes and cascades, little rivers and their glens, windy shores and sunny coves, succeeded. Now some strand would glow with butterfly color, and now the dark recesses would take on a demon gloom. As we neared the northeast end of the island we noticed the effect of the elements on the battle-ship's granite bows. Here an inviolable fastness was assailed by the terrific weight of winter gales sweeping down their ocean reach of lake. Violence was pitted against endurance in

the heart of snow-storms; and the living trees, sentient, shackled to the rock like Prometheus, tried to flee from the flake and smothering foam, and were rooted against the disaster as in a human dream.

Some time I shall go back to Isle Royale. Romance is written on that great granite hull. Some time I may want to read the Britannica through, or finish Wells's History; there is the place for that. Or possibly the deer may need defending from the wolves. Or, again, it might be well in my old age to retire thither and found a Mission for Incurable Romantics, superannuated professors who have not had their fill of beauty, women so civilized that they are not dismayed by a little repose, young men who have read "Walden" and young girls who have dreamed dreams. Undoubtedly I shall go back.

There came an hour on the next day when we would have sacrificed he-goats or any other domestic property to Naniboujou to have been back. We had got a mile or so out from the Isle on our way home when we found that there was a very respectable swell from the southwest, there being a clear sweep for the wind all the distance from Duluth. But the waves were not breaking. The *Arawana* felt a quivering pleasure in their great lift, the flying ahead on the crest, the falling back into the green hollow. Had that been all, the voy-

age would have been an exhilaration, as the lake was a palette of liquid color, the deepest blues sinking into the richest greens, with a strip of apple sky along the northern horizon. But a wind from the northwest began to darken the water, and I knew at last what Homer was talking about in his song of the wine-dark seas. Presently the upper heaven became overrun with long fronds of cloud, a swift ivory seaweed spread over a blue, blue sea of sky. It was exquisite, but the quickness of its growing was portentous. And soon a school of mackerel cloudlets swam above and dimmed the sun, and the first chill of danger hovered over us. I knew from the grave face of Mr. Stewart that all was not as it should be. Impudent wavelets curled in the face of the great swell, and across the face of the lake I saw an increasing whiteness. The bow and engine-room were covered by a stout canvas, which protected us as apron and shield. (On this the first wave now splattered.

Against the superiority of man one has the weapon of admiration and the remedy of love, but against nature there seems no remedy. As that magnificent zenith filled with an aërial vapor, as the wind rose and the cry of the valkyrs was heard on its tongue, the divinity that pervades the quieter world of wood and meadow seemed aloof. We four, gathered in that shell, now tossed by



THE NORTH SHORE

Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

the great racing mounds of water from the southwest, now splashed by the rising confusion from the northwest, seemed very much on our own. Not that the refuge and strength of spirit which is God was touched in any way. But that is eternal, while our peril was temporal, on a lower plane, and incidental. The gods do not confuse degrees.

Pie Island lay ahead, our goal. Once in its lee we should be safe, and fortunately for our peace of mind there was no choice of action; we could only forge ahead. To turn was hazardous, to return impossible. The little waves grew and dashed and curled and fattened into combers. The southwest kept its swinging, and when the two influences met beneath our bow we shot into the air to fall with a dangerous thud, a foot of green breaking across the bow and pounding the thin canvas cover. Were that to be rent, the engine would stop, and we pass automatically into the obituary column.

The curious thing about it all was that none of us was very worried; and I experienced few of those sensations that sometimes come at the thought of danger. In the first place I was employed constantly at the pump, for by now the spray was flying over the boat in blinding sheets; in the second place, it seemed incredible that we should not pull through somehow, and in the third,

it was vastly moving and exciting. Always a fresh wave was heaving high overhead; always was there a new combination of swell and comber to be met. And, lastly, it was unimaginably beautiful. Death, now that I think about it, would have been swift and natural; and our last mortal sight would have been one of supreme majesty. The driving sky above was a counterpart of the driven lake, windrows of clouds breaking and shining white like our wild seas. The sun still shot shafts of flying gold across the wastes of ultramarine and gray, and alternately picked out and deserted Pie Island, a great and somber castle on a purple sea.

I looked back. The two ladies, covered as well as possible (for the wind would not have permitted the canvas cabin), bowed their heads to the slashing spray. But they were not pale. The blood of Scotland is not so different from the blood of Sparta, and when they saw me looking they smiled in my eyes. No man could quite lose hope while the women about him were so brave.

There was one grim half-hour. The sun disappeared, and I grew shiveringly cold. The waves drenched us with an insolent rapidity. The lake was gray with fury. But the *Arawana*, laboring, lifted, dashed, and half-drowned, never missed a heart-beat, and Skipper Stewart ran her with a skill that saved our lives, always managing to

evade the greater combers which would certainly have overwhelmed us. I understood now why Æneas promised cows to Neptune (or was it a maiden?) if he would only call off his waves. But vows at that moment seemed a kindergarten expedient. Our lives were our prayers, and the way we had lived them our offering.

Then suddenly the weight was taken from the heart. The tyrannous northwest lulled; we drew into the lee of our island, on whose turrets the sun broke with a sudden glory. We sailed into a sheltered bay like a homing gull, and it was over.

“Whew!” said Mrs. Stewart. “You did that splendidly, Charles.”

“Well,” replied the boss, “she ’s a pretty good boat, a pretty darn good boat.”

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GOOD SHIP AMERICA

TIME, the undissuadable, bears all things beyond the horizon, yet the glow of the great moment long endures, and we exclaim at the memory, "Ah, did you once see Shelley plain?" Indeed the glow remains to grow clearer, and Shelley is seen not only plain but with a rising beauty. And so it is excusable for me to look back upon that meal we had upon the shores of Pie Island as one of my unforgettable repasts. Doubtless it was, as a banquet, singular. We dripped like Nereids. The food looked as if it had been out in the rain. And our talk was not in keeping with our Gargantuan hall. But who of us will forget those pillars of rock, the sun, the jokes, the laughter, as Miss Black suggested that we go on the road as the Unfinished Quartet. Who can forget our reëntury into Thunder Bay, with the Welcome Islands—another lovely name—shining like living emeralds on the evening lake. The river looked very gentle now, and we, not being able to part quite so decisively, all had supper at the Stewarts' with Dr. Black presiding

over the wine and playing the difficult rôle of listener to our four-piece recital.

"I 'd like to be starting back to-morrow," said Mrs. Stewart.

"I would start," said I, "if there were a way."

"There 's the *America*," said Miss Black.

And thanks to those three words, there I was, too, the next morning just, and we were headed for Isle Royale and Duluth and points not yet decided. The wind was blowing from a black-browed west, but now I could scorn the cold comb-ers. She was a snug little ship, and since the season was over for the tourist, she was like a private yacht. In the forward cabin two single-verbers were enjoying themselves in this way:

"We was there."

"What? Was you there? *Was* you?"

"Yes, we was."

They went on like that, but one could laugh. With the monologists, those perfected egotists, however, it is different. One will ruin a room. You will save time by running away. For be they women or men, these congenital talkers are always mental bankrupts. No one can take in ten cents' worth of thought and issue a dollar's worth of it very long and remain solvent. The Lord made self-respect the first virtue. How a person who gabbles away what was intended to be the

very essence of self can have any self-respect I cannot divine. I should ask the invisible cloak to defend me, first, not from robbers, debtors, or impecunious ladies of the pavement, but from those bores, who, plucking one by the lapel, chatter into one's ear with the brilliance of a parakeet, the continuity of a mill-wheel. They can happen, God knows or can find out, in the best clubs. But they cannot stand a heavy wind, nature's volubility, and there were none on the deck of the *America*. I paced it and recalled the zest of the wintry Atlantic.

The captain was in the pilot-house, a square-jawed, firmly set, bronzed figure, a Norwegian. At first I despaired of finding the common footing necessary to intercourse with captains, but I knew that if I could once creep under the tarpaulin of his reticence I'd find heart-room. It is a hard heart to come at, is the Norseman's, but worth all effort. Within the rock is the purest gold. And when one is once admitted to that privacy it is for life. Not even the Scotch or the English make stancher, finer friends; whether mountaineer or mariner, they are true and kind and far-seeing.

We began quietly by a council of criticism on passengers in general, thence poked up into little fiords of philosophy, and by the time we had reached the wondrous Isle I saw that I was going

to enjoy my trip no matter where. The man made the *America* behave like a trained cat. He brought her in and out of the little coves, called at tiny landings for fish, trod water while fishermen rowed out with their catch, turned on a cart-wheel, and lost no time. By sunset I had seen all the little ports that the *Arawana* had passed, and we were headed for Grand Portage.

Next morning I came on deck to find myself coasting up the right-hand shore of the V at whose apex sits Duluth. I saw a vast mushroom of smoke. A lonely farm appeared on the rocky shore, more farms, then some cottages, a lot more cottages, then houses, brick and stone houses, an apartment, rows of apartments, office-buildings, hives of office-buildings, tiers of them: Duluth, the Zenith City. We glided through an aërial drawbridge and docked in the center of the city, which now, within the smoke-zone, looked shining, clean, and interspersed with parks.

“You ’d better come with us to-morrow along the South Shore,” said Captain Ege.

“Wild horses could n’t keep me from it,” said I, feeling that sinking of the auricle one has at leaving the clean wilderness for the city. The man who said that cities are caused by total strangers who come together to make living impossible for each other had a feeling for the truth.

But an afternoon and a night in Duluth ac-

climated me. I began to appreciate the spirit of a people who had chiseled a foothold for a modern city out of the solid rock. I walked along the skyline, a glorious boulevard. I rode across the bay after dark and saw a coronet of lights thirty miles around. I saw "Nanook of the North," one of the finest picturizations that patience ever consummated, by a Port Arthur man, saw it to good music, and I read advertisements of a Paderewski recital, in itself a recommendation to any town. I began to like Duluth.

It was in the morning that I had my scare. I saw a book on the stand called "We Explore the Great Lakes." Ye Gods! Was somebody ahead of me? Had some other rover seen the Nipigon and Point Isacor and the preserves of Lamb Island with eyes that looked deeper than mine? And by Webb Waldron, too. I opened to the table of contents as a forger listens to a jury-foreman and read the chapter headings, "Sea-Coasts of the Middle West," "Aspiring Ashland," "Beerless Milwaukee," "Piking up West Michigan," "Buffalo and Farewell," "The Zenith City." I wonder now how the salesgirl interpreted my sigh of relief. I wonder if she saw the sudden joy which must have been expressed in my legs, arms, and mouth as a secondary thought came to mind. Why, here was luck indeed. Webb Waldron had saved me some weeks of duty-doing. The South

Shore had lain heavily on my conscience. I knew that it offered rich copper-mines and ranges made of iron; I knew about the Pictured Rocks on Grand Island; and I had read of the region around Whitefish Lake in Michigan which Mr. George Shiras, Third, the wizard wild-animal photographer, had made his own. But my heart was full of the North, and gluttony in sight-seeing is as painful as in gourmandizing. And now I was absolved. The blood of my own book need not be diluted by duty. When I went aboard the *America* even Captain Ege noted my new mien.

"You must have made a night of it," he said, smiling.

"I've made two months by this," I retorted, waving "We Explore the Great Lakes" in his face. "To-morrow I go north again with you."

And that was the song that underlay my day. The North symbolizes for me all that is mounting and free, and to be north-bound is to be released. Nor did anything I saw that day of coasting those flat southern shores change my resolution. I found Mr. Waldron's book far more interesting than the view. Indeed to read it is better than to see the places he enlivens, and down his pages runs a procession of the people that one meets. I am thankful that we overlapped so little.

So, in the jovial *America*, I turned north again on a day of belated Indian summer, a day of bril-

liant hillsides seen through a slumbrous haze. The mountain-sides were one vast Turkish rug of rich dyes subdued to a deeper beauty by the atmosphere. Hour by hour we steamed ahead along increasingly rugged shores, passing the picturesque light at Little Two Harbors, calling at some hamlet or other to let off the news sociably enough, putting out a sewing-machine or a victrola for these lonely posts on the frontier. I hung over the side watching the husky men unload mattresses and soap-chips, writing-tables and safety-razor blades, watching the long swell break low. When we got under way it was to be fascinated by the continued story of the shore. Headlands haunted the mist. Ruddy cliffs in seven veils of autumnal smoke leaned over at us and passed. Northward the lake lay a cool slate blue, southward a flashing, million-faceted silver. And the hills of wine-color rose to mountains, while the farm-lands ceased. Dusk came, a dream scene of shadows in pageant, and I was going north, north.

In the cabin sat a solitary man reading "The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page." By their books you can know them. A man's clothes, countenance, and company are more or less forced on him by circumstances; but he chooses his books. I knew from Page I should find an agreeable companion. His graying hair merely cor-

roborated his statement that he had watched Duluth grow from hamlethood to its present civic stature; it seemed to deny his other statements, that he was starting off on an inland voyage to look over some property, that he overlooked hardships. He began to tell me things about Duluth, then of Isle Royale, and I felt it like a chance lost when I learned that he had to go ashore at the next stop. Youth in age, culture on the frontier, charm with strength, wisdom from living deep, all these did he represent. If Mr. George Rupley chances across this book, I want him to know that he colored my opinion of that region like a vision, as well as sped the hours.

In the morning I shook hands figuratively with the *America*, and firmly with Captain Elge the hospitable. It seemed to me as I took the trolley for Fort William that I was about to shake hands with my trip. I had come, seen, and collected. I had got to the saturation-point. I had four notebooks awaiting digestion. Like a cow, I must seek some quiet spot where I could chew over this cud of sweet and curious fancy. Furthermore I had just come through several months of quaint doings, irregular hours in most irregular beds, and needed home. It was nearly October. All signs pointed homeward. And yet I could not bear to leave this lake.

"Well, you don't have to," said Miss Black, be-

fore whom I laid my difficulties. "Go out to Silver Islet. You 'll be quiet enough out there," and she laughed a laugh to herself.

"I would like to see the equinoctial storm," I added.

"Then Silver Islet 's the place for you. You and Ernie Cross will have it all to yourselves, and Mrs. Bready has offered you a house."

My exclamation indicated surprise.

"Yes," continued Miss Black, "a very charming little house on the lake."

"Is there a lake on the island?" I asked. "That 's almost as complicated as the life on St. Ignace, where one can live on an island in a lake on an island in the lake."

"Well, you know I suppose that Silver Islet is n't an island."

"What is it, then?" I asked. "A mistake? Like your rivers which are n't rivers but lakes interrupted now and then by an accident."

"Silver Islet proper is a mere rock, yet it was once the world's richest silver-mine. What we call Silver Islet is a beach near-by where a few of us go in summers. And Ernie Cross is the place incarnate, a quiet young fellow who makes his living, or his millions, rather, out of skinning foxes. His recreation is in being nice to people. He is also a store of information."

"Silver Islet sounds like the place for me.

I'll take some books from your library, some blank paper, and the Corona, go out there, live in Mrs. Bready's house, and entertain."

"Entertain?" repeated Miss Black. "There 's nobody within twenty miles of you."

"I'll entertain the equinox," I said, "and whatever ideas and opinions come to my door."

And so it happened that, at her suggestion, my book became one chapter longer. Letters in denunciation can be directed to Fort William to save forwarding.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I ENTERTAIN AT SILVER ISLET

MY house sat in the dimple of a knoll which overlooked the great lake to the south. Sunsetward lay a pond into which fell the reflection of the Sleeping Giant. For companionship some spruces pitched their green tents beside and some white birches stood gracefully about. It was a gray, substantial bungalow, with a large living-room whose windows looked on both the lakes, a bedroom, a sheltered porch, and a kitchen in which anybody, I should think, could burst spontaneously into cookery. It was precisely the retreat one would plan in a dream, granted sufficient ingenuity, and it was here that I arrived at the end of September, spread out my effects, lined a shelf with my books, lit a fire on the hearth, in the kitchen stove and in my pipe, and was at home.

“Now,” I felt like calling out of the door to the equinox, “drop in any time that you’re ready.” I had felt rather worried that morning, for it had been raining splendidly in Fort William, and I was afraid that the storm would ar-

rive before I should be at home to receive it. But the clouds had broken, and Ernest Cross, who had assisted in the instalment of my menage, said that we were in for a spell of fair weather, though already the equinox was late. And now I sat with nothing on my mind except the four undigested note-books, nothing on my hands except a considerable quantity of unrecorded time. Was this freedom? "When I count three," I said to myself, "I am going to start to enjoy life." I got out a fresh pencil and pad and put them on the table. Into this virgin note-book were to go the names of my guests. I sat down again, trying to grasp the fact that nothing bound me, absolutely nothing. Then I remembered the kitchen fire. A few sticks saved it, and I sat down again. What should I do first, read, write, think, eat? Ah, yes, eat. I got an apple and resumed my seat. This was going to be wonderful, having all this time with no interruptions and nothing to do but enjoy life, whenever that process should choose to begin. It was hot with the fire. I opened the door on the porch and again sat down. After such a harried life of boat-sailings, camp-makings, portagings, queer meals in curious places, this would be paradise, it might be possibly within the next five minutes. But now, my God, but it was dull!

I rose and looked out of the window in the sub-

conscious hope perhaps that some one might be a-voyaging to visit me on the lake. Why had n't I insisted that the rest of the Unfinished Quartet come out? Why had n't I arranged for a visitor every day or so, yes, even every day: there would still remain the evenings to read. My eye caught a glimmer on the lake. How idiotic to be indoors when I'd taken all this trouble to visit the lake. I strolled out on the knoll and climbed.

I sat panting on the crest. My calm had returned. The water, attuned to the reverie of the gray twilight, lay there eventlessly, waiting even as I. An occasional drip from a shaken fir, the subdued tweet of a snowbird, only these stirred the silence into a little trouble of sound, and all was still again. I might have been sitting on the coast of Maine. Gray ledges stretched along the shore; spruces and firs and birch climbed from the lake; moss and lichen beautified every cranny of the rock; and there to the south lay the lake, a sea of sleepy blue. A subtle happiness crept from the heart along my veins. I knew that here I should know the quintessence of existence for a time, should steep myself in the infinite realities. In the early dusk I strolled back home.

I entered the house and was surprised to encounter my first guest dashing out in my face. But he soon returned, having smelled out the apple which I'd left on a table by the porch rail.



Photograph by Geo. Shiras, 3rd. Copyright, 1898

FLASH-LIGHT OF A BIG BUCK. ANTLEERS IN THE VELVET



Photograph by Geo. Shiras, 3rd.

FLASH-LIGHT OF A DOE WATCHING APPROACHING JACK-LIGHT

He paid so little attention to me that I wondered whether he should be rated as guest, thief, or member of the family. But he won my admiration, being very beautiful with his four stripes down the back, instead of three as with our eastern chipmunks—and also very ambitious. The gulf between the table and the rail was at least a foot across. This was an obstacle to purloining the apple. Artaxerxes (the name I eventually found most fitting for him) experimented with this gulf to make sure that the air was safe, and finally tackled the apple. If this had been hollow I declare that Artaxerxes could have curled up inside it. But he was the hollow one. Fortunately the bite I'd taken out of it made transportation easier, though I could see that even in Art's opinion it was no sinecure. He moved it to the edge of the table, paused, made one more trial leap, returned, gathered the apple to him, and to my astonishment jumped with it to the railing, balancing, quivering, but holding firmly to his booty. I felt like applauding. I thought how proud I should have been if, with a Steinway grand in my arms, I had leaped lightly across the Ausable Chasm.

But Artaxerxes was no chipmunk Newton. He discovered no universal law wrapped up in apples. He was now nonplussed and annoyed. Instead of kicking the apple off and letting it roll

by gravity to his home, he took a disgusted look at the situation and let it be. Just to prove to him that the gods are on the side of enterprise, I finally cut the fruit into quarters, and it was not long before he learned that I preferred my guests to eat while sitting on the toe of my moccasin. Art and I became friends, or at least as much friends as he deigned to allow. For a chipmunk cradled in hospitality, who was not only accustomed to about 175 meals a day but to making off with an equivalent amount for rainy weather, he seemed fairly haughty to his host. But I used to chaff him on his German prowess at eating, and perhaps he held this against me. And rightly, for those beady eyes, that scampering tail, were the insignia of fun and delicacy. There is no grossness in the wild, only innocence.

I had supper with another friend, Stewart Edward White, propped up against the sugar-bowl. "The Forest" is a book that will stay green as long as the bush it is about. It is the book I most often hand to those master-thieves, the gentle borrowers, and most rarely get back. Its essence is not the juices of a spirit like "Walden," America's master-work set in the fields and woods; it has not the comprehensiveness of Thompson-Seton's "Northern Prairies," and is but a pebble to Thompson-Seton's other boulder, "Life Histories of Northern Mammals"; but this pebble is

all gem. I have often wondered whether Mr. White is as emphatic in real life as in his books. He knows he knows, like Kipling. But a reader must be deficient in the spirit of give and take who refuses to take from such a giver. And as I read the chapter "On Woods Indians" over the tea-cup's rim, I thought that the truth, as I now knew it to be, had never been expressed with such a beautiful clarity. Not every one cares to live with Thoreau, but none can refuse to travel with Stewart Edward White who has read one page of "The Forest."

The spell induced carried over as I sat by the fire, my thoughts going back to the woods Indians of my summer, to Dan, and Jerry and John Head, to Stewart Michel and Antoine Nanni, and others of their proud and perishing blood. It gave me a tingling satisfaction to review the times of sun and rain, of rapid and portage and evening fire, when these men who played with the forces of destruction and I had been comrades. I would have taken lashes to have had the secret back of their black eyes with the surface lights.

Ernest Cross knocked presently, a young fellow, well knit, of medium height and weight and color, with the rich man's mouth, but a thoughtful kindness in his blue eyes. "I thought I 'd look in to see how things are coming," he said. "The first night out is sometimes lonely."

"Well, you make my third guest this evening," I said. "Artaxerxes, Stewart Edward White, and you make quite a list for a new-comer. And I'm expecting the equinox, in addition."

"Who's Artaxerxes?" he asked, excusably. And when I'd told him, he smiled. "If you like animals that much, you and I'll get on well together out here. To-morrow you must see my foxes."

"And the mine? Is that seeable? I wish you'd tell me about it," a remark which Miss Black had suggested that I make. And I produced one of those telescope-length cigars which guarantees an hour's worth of information to any inquirer. The story took more than an hour. I condense it here to a five-minute summary, a skeleton, a mere skull and cross-bones of the tale. But if you will sit between Ernie and me, and gaze into the fire, listening with one ear to his low firm voice, with the other to the faint beat and wash of Lake Superior lapping on that very islet out there in the dark, you may get a bit of the thrill that I felt as I heard the story of the world's richest silver mine, an Arabian Nights' story of sudden hopes, royal realizations, and tragic ends. And smoke, too, if you like, for I want everybody to be comfortable in this chapter.

"To start with," he said, "there are thousands

of islands like Silver Islet scattered around this lake, some with a stand of timber, some just bare rocks; but there 's never been a second like that, and probably won't ever be again.

"It was away back in 1868, my father says, that two surveyors went out to drive some observation stakes. They 'd taken a dig with a crowbar to plant one, and they saw something suspicious like silver. Another dig, and they was staring at a nugget of pure silver, and not only one nugget but a nest of 'em, like gulls' eggs. Being Scotch, they didn't die of excitement but set to work discoverin'. Their names were Thomas MacFarlane and John Morgan.

"The upshot was that they found a vein twenty foot wide, with nuggets of solid silver lying around in the water by the hatful. You know how cold the water is; standing in it is like standing in an ice-cream freezer that you 're operatin'. But they stood, by heck, they waded, and dived and worked up to their necks just as if it 'd been warm as tea. And when they 'd dug out about half a ton of ore, selling at a dollar a pound, the Montreal Mining Company, which owned the place, sold out to two Detroiters, a Major Sibley and a Captain Frue. The Montreal people calculated it 'd cost 'em fifty thousand dollars to protect the mine from storms. They thought

they 'd been lucky to get two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars for it. That little deal lost 'em about three million dollars.

"Well, the little property had found just the right hands to fall into, Captain Frue being a fellow to snuggle right up to his job and stay with it. He at once sent out a raft of timber, thirty miners, some horses and machinery. He wanted to sink a shaft in the middle of the islet, which meant that he 'd have to build an encircling crib of timber and fill it with rock, and it was just fifty-three years ago this month that he went to work. I guess he was n't keen on entertaining equinoxes.

"But I 've never seen a storm on this lake yet that waited for an invitation. He had 'em, had 'em right along. His breakwater was washed away twice. For ninety days the men worked eighteen hours a day, and the final cribbing was ten times the size of the rock, or about nine hundred feet each way. The breakwater to protect it was seventy-five feet broad and twenty feet above the water. On this mock island he set up a shaft-house, boarding-houses, machine-shops, blacksmith and carpenter shops, and a lot of other buildings, with even a library and club-rooms as well as big docks for shipping the ore. You can see some of the buildings yet. And over here on

the beach there was a regular town. He had nine hundred miners now. Those Detroiters meant business."

"They always do," I mumbled.

"Captain Frue was n't happy with just fixing up the best harbor in hundreds of miles with a sectional dry-dock and all. He had to keep busy; so he set about inventing a thing to save stamp-mill slime. It's used yet in mines. He supervised the family life, saw that enough supplies were in to last the winter, sold the food at wholesale prices, had a bar-room with a blackboard in it, and a man was n't allowed to have more than two drinks. He simply waved his hand and things was done, and he got a million three hundred thousand dollars out of the islet the first year. The shares rose from fifty dollars to twenty-five thousand dollars. The stockholders bought a yacht they called the *Silver Spray* and brought a lot of fine people here, bank presidents and titles from England, and there was great doings.

"Even in winter it was gay, what with dancing and music and literary affairs and the mail coming in by dog-train every so often from Duluth. And year after year it kept up, the shafts going deeper and deeper, the galleries longer and longer. They brought more coal and

pumped more water out, and kept thinking it 'd go on forever, though they 'd got down thirteen hundred feet. Be you superstitious?"

Ernest's sudden question found me unprepared philosophically. "Not about everything," I said.

"Well, neither am I, and yet listen to this. They 'd got down thirteen hundred feet and into the thirteenth autumn when a lot of unlucky things happened all at once. Winter set in early, only a little coal was on hand, the fleet of colliers with the winter's supply did not appear. People began to look at each other with dismay. What would happen? Why, if the pumps stopped a day the mine was lost. Navigation closed. Father said it felt as if a dear one was dying. The men and women worked heroically to feed the furnaces with wood when the coal gave out. Surely the fleet would find a way to come. News, tragic news, came instead. In a drunken spree the commander of the fleet had got off his course. He had been caught in the freeze. There would be no coal that winter. In despair they fed the buildings to the furnaces, but the water gained. They fought the unequal battle up till March. Then one day the huge engines were silenced, and the silver wonder of the world closed down forever."

Ernest's voice stopped short. I was moved,

too, for there was something personal and of romance in the picture of the gay colony in this wilderness, the waiting for the coal, the fortuitous tragedy of that loss through a whisky bout, the fruitless heroism of the workers.

“Is it done forever?” I asked.

“Yes. It would mean pumping out the lake. Shafts, slopes, drifts, are filled. The lighthouse is gone. The wreck is nearly perfect. Even the great breakwater is a ruin. Though there is much silver there, it is a chapter closed.”

The time passed gently, sinuously, winding down the day like a mountain trail from shining dawn to painted dusk. A mellowness pervaded nature, the sharp frosts of morning quickly yielding to the unclouded sun. Every day on arising I looked down the eastern highway of the lake to see if my friend the equinox was in sight, and every day I saw level gardens of blue flowers, or waving fields of gold, sometimes dancing like Wordsworth's daffodils, only a myriad times as many, such daffodils and buttercups as may dance in those endless gardens behind the sun. No storm, no cloud even, shadowed the horizon, at most the risen brightness of a fog; and no wind blew.

One day my guest-book, in which a chipmunk, a writer, a trapper, a silver-mine, some foxes, a

passing Indian, Captain Faeder of the *Mary Scott*, Naniboujou, and a particularly fine sunset had written themselves, this book of various guests fairly twittered with pleasure to receive the signatures of seven. By a miracle which had never heretofore occurred with me, the house was in almost ridiculous order, the oatmeal boiler cleaned out, the cake-box clasped, no crumbs on the window-sill, a new dish-towel on the rack, and even Artaxerxes and Corona in their respective hole and case. Mrs. Bready, who had lent me the place, was the first up the hill. She was too much the lady, however, to be noticed peeking around counting the chairs or seeing if there were any window-panes or fireplaces missing. But the fact that the house was hearth-whole fortified me greatly, and I was able to receive my guests without that haunting feeling that the rug was upside down or the sink insufficiently scalded. Dr. Black was escorting his daughter and Mrs. Dann, followed by Mrs. Stewart and Inspector Dann of the Canadian Mounted. Mr. Stewart lingered by the *Arawana*.

"We came with very mixed motives," said Miss Black. "You see I should be answerable to the coroner for mentioning this opportunity to you, and when I mentioned to Mrs. Bready that she might be hanged as accessory if you perished, it reminded her that she had not told you that the

container over the kitchen window held rat-poison. In addition, there were these letters and a telegram."

"Which accounts for only two of us," said Mrs. Stewart, laughing. "Now I'll admit to coming because I wanted to see how a man could possibly make out alone like this."

"I must show you," said I, feeling grandly conscious of the cleaned oatmeal boiler.

"Don't believe them, my boy," said Dr. Black in an aside. "It was n't only conscience or curiosity brought them."

"What I came for," said Mr. Stewart, "was a chance to say something about our trip. At home I cannot begin a story before each of the ladies exclaims, 'That reminds me.'"

"What an extravagant remark, Charles!" interrupted Mrs. Stewart. "When you are so skilful at reminiscing, I believe a professional lecturer would retire in discouragement from the contest."

By this time I had them seated and had mentally prepared a tea-table with both lemon and napkins, while trying to converse with Inspector Dann without envy. God had made him comely enough to begin with, but life as a constable of the Mounted had finished him off into that splendid, that rare, rare being called a man. Like all his kind, he had an elegance of reserve about his

work which was discouraging. He talked, however, about the work impersonally, putting together the skeleton of the force, covering it with its flesh of duty and romance, and breathing into it some life. I could see that to be its most inconspicuous member you must have learned self-mastery and an intelligent devotion. As he talked of the lonely patrols I was left to imagine the vein of naked courage and stark integrity running through the organization. When I meet a person like this I have to remind myself with a grimace that I content myself too easily with inferior company. A man, in my gallery of the ideal, is a fellow with self-respect enough to keep his body at the fittest, with mind enough to have convictions, with courage enough to yield them only to the wiser than he, and with enough love of his fellow-men to make him gentle. You can meet such men here and again there, if you have the penetration to discern them. For they are never loud, and rarely conspicuous, except in moments of trial. They are the supreme peak of the race; rise one step higher and you find the gods. And yet they occur in the wilderness as in the capitals, sensitive, brave, straightforward, and quietly ambitious. From this rare delight of talking with one I went out to put on the tea-water and to read my telegram.

Arriving at Club to-morrow. Hope to find you there.

TAR.

They declined to stay to supper, though I am almost sure that the tea was nicely served. Miss Black rarely takes the fourth cup.

"I 'll remember to send your wire, and I 'll be out Sunday," said the skipper of the *Arawana*.

"Yes, if the equinox does n't blow in by then, it 's all up."

"It was n't news of a death," he added sympathetically, noticing my mien.

"No, of a friend," I said, laughing in order to straighten up the corners of my mouth. "He could summon me from Tibet and I'd come, gladly. But for his word I might never have left. Naniboujou has put a spell on me."

"There 's this about it," said Mr. Stewart. "The lake will always be waiting for you, it and the rest of us."

"And there 's this," I added. "Nothing can quite break Naniboujou's spell; and I am glad."

Sunday came, but not the errant equinox. The world as well as I was waiting. I had climbed my knoll to see morning rise from the lake. It recalled my summer of mornings; July's still like noons, August's gay with their gusty brilliance, September's turbulent at first, then mel-

lowing into the perfect autumn. In the memory of autumns there had been no autumn on the lake like this. From my granite headland I saw it lying, as with folded wings, the first fires of awakening glittering in its eyes. And suddenly the sky-line was obliterated in a flood of dawn, the dawn of my last day.

I had great trouble in making Artaxerxes understand. Breakfast he was used to, but not to boarded windows and locked doors; and I wondered what would come into his chipmunk mind when my toe was not there at noontime on which to perch, or my shoulder where he said grace—afterward. Art had put on weight. I tried to caution him against stuffing his cinnamon sides any tighter, and yet with only human irrationality piled stores of food beside his home. Being natural himself, he did not say good-by. When all was locked and clean and packed to the dock and Ernest was said *au revoir* to, I resumed my vigil on the sunny headland, my back against a friendly birch, my eyes roving the lake and occasionally glancing at the prow of the great cape around which the little *Arawana* was to come. Everywhere was an enchanted calm, and Emerson's stanza came to mind:

They put their finger on their lip,
The Powers above:

The seas their islands clip,
The moons in ocean dip,
They love, but name not love.

And that is the transcendent loving, I thought, requiring the loved to enjoy transcendent faith. To have a supreme faith is to know the supreme happiness. Not to have it is to account for the extreme unhappinesses prevalent. Thinking is a helpful sport, and gallant; but to discard the basic ideas that lie insoluble in the weak acids of our brain, just because they cannot be thought out, seems more childish than to have a childlike faith in them. Or so it seemed that morning when sky and water were the soul of thought. I should have liked to talk with D. H. Lawrence, who has an imperturbable confidence that everything which the world holds lovely and of good repute is foolishness. I should have enjoyed the company of George Santayana, that masterly debater for the negative, who holds that the soul is a habit of matter. (Who got matter into the habit, I would ask?) Then I should have liked to confront these and their following with that company, that family of poets, oaks of the spirit, to whom Lawrence is a sear and fallen leaf and Santayana a sort of brilliant ivy on the racial tree of knowledge, whose roots drink from the deep, imperishable beliefs of man. Dante would be there, and St. Francis, and Christ, who said,

not as an aside to His friends but as a program, "In my father's house are many mansions." Plato, would be there, on whose lips Beauty and Love and Immortality are the frequent words. Emerson would be there, caught off his thinker's feet by the irresistible tide, and crying, "O my brothers, God exists," as both sages and children know. And many another of that strong grove of souls whose evergreenness lies in affirmation. Life itself is the supreme reality, desire is its aliment, wonder the air it breathes, and seeking the best goal it knows. And as I thought of these things on that headland, surrounded by the invisible company, the questers, solacers, and answerers, I felt eased in spirit, for I was not wholly alone. And there was growing to be done.

At last my eye discerned the tiny *Arawana* below the Giant Cape, and I let thought go, to drink my fill of the great beauty about me. A lonely gull sailed beneath the cliff. A sleepy swell curved on the rocks far down between the clinging firs. Isle Royale, lying like a cloud of misty silver, notched the long horizon line. The Sleeping Giant still slumbered in his haunted wood, evergreen and thriving on the immortality of earth. While elsewhere, southward and west and east, lay the softly breathing lake, severing man from man, yet uniting age with age, a various mirror of the eternal beauty. It had given



Courtesy of Canadian Pacific Railway

me a widened understanding and filled my inner ear with music. For its savagery and tenderness, for its bracingness and its mystic moods, I felt my thanks, there by its lifted shores while the sun poured down.

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A. R. Harding Co., Columbus, Ohio.

Mr. Spears rowed along the North Shore of Lake Superior and has written a frank, interesting account of the experience.

"Log of the North Shore Club," Kirk Alexander.

G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

Gives the local color of a restricted bit of the North Shore

"The Great Lakes," J. Oliver Curwood.

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A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago.

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